MAY 13 — 19, 1978

RS. 2.50

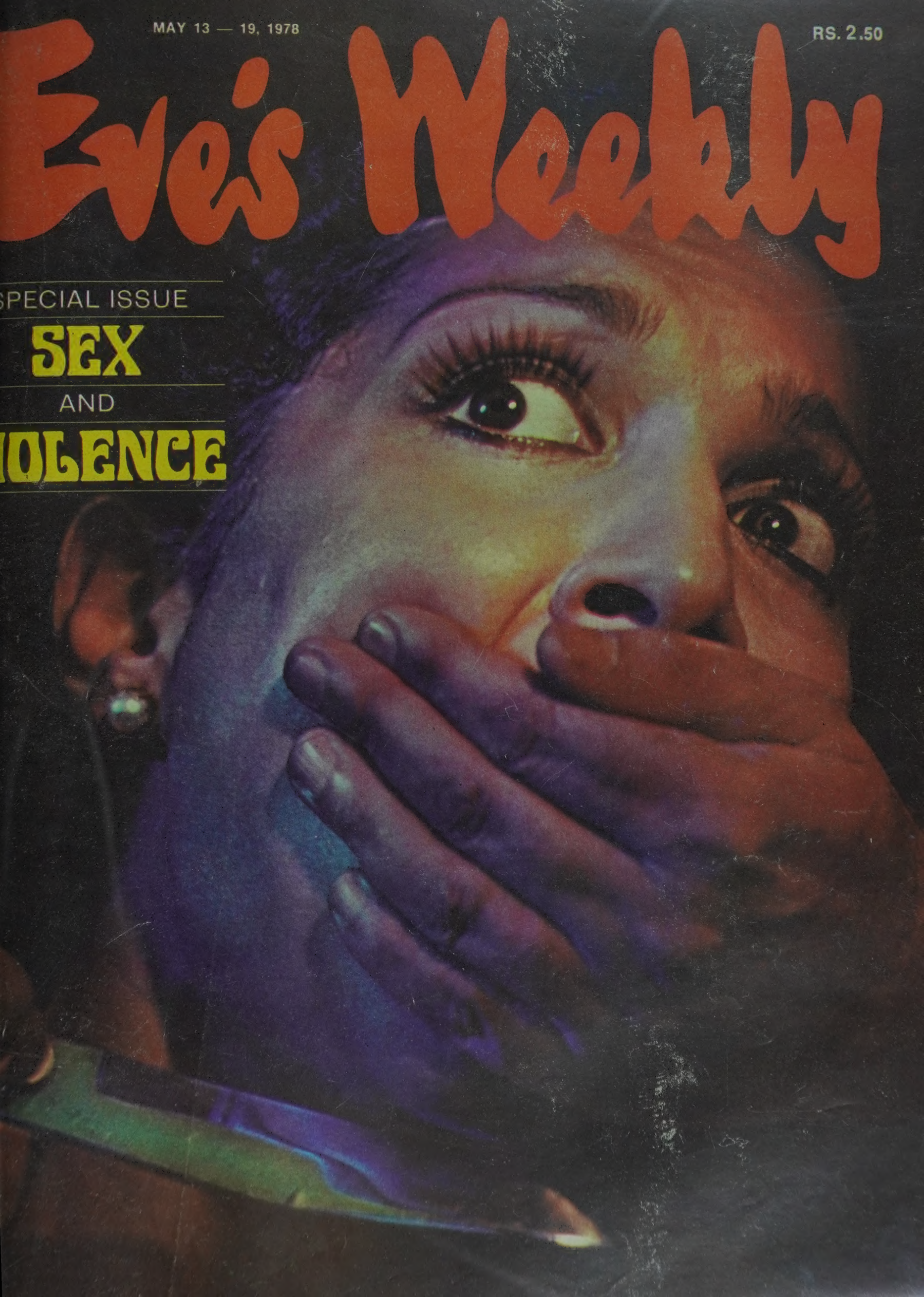
Eve's Weekly

SPECIAL ISSUE

SEX

AND

IOLENCE



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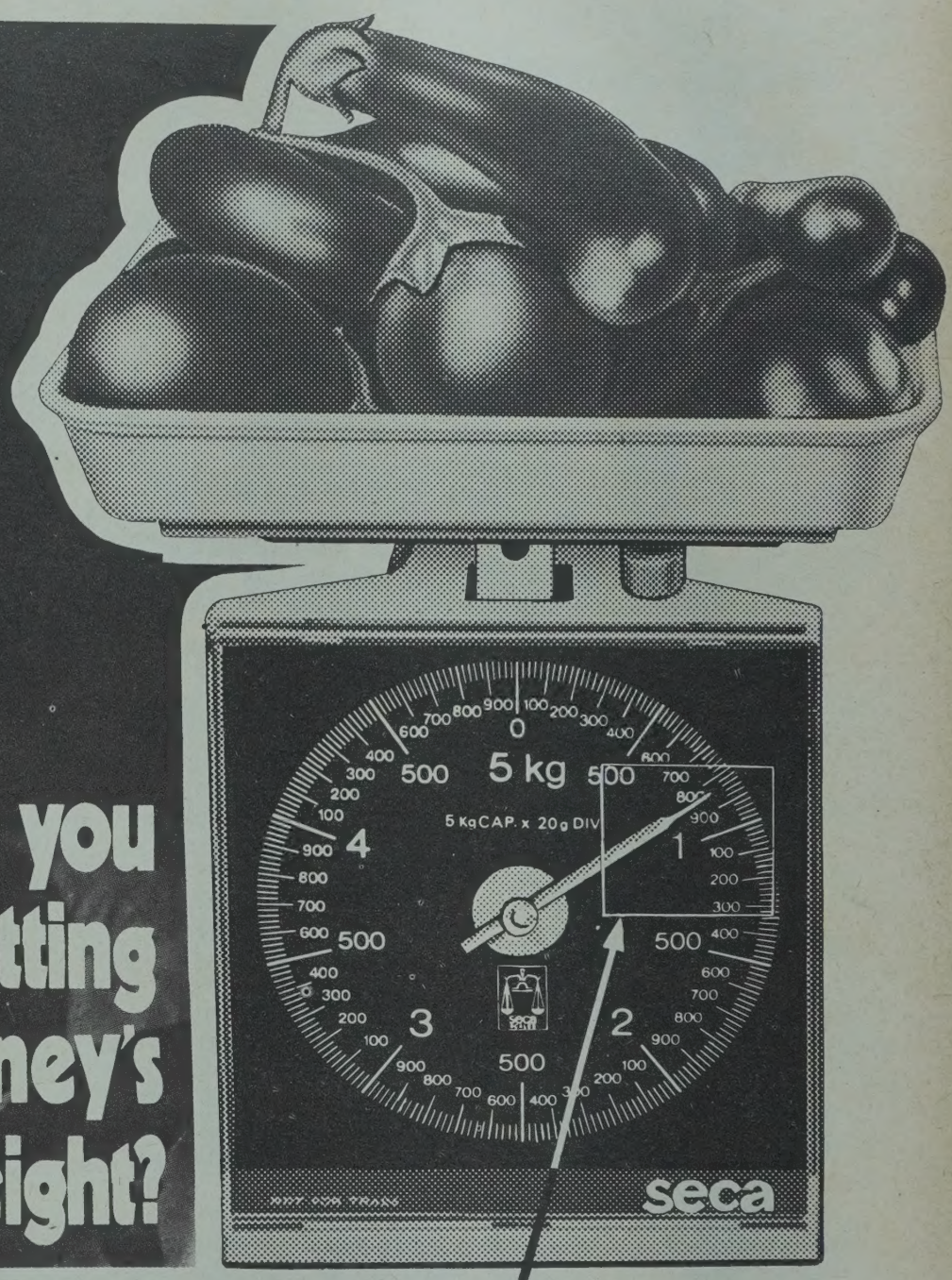

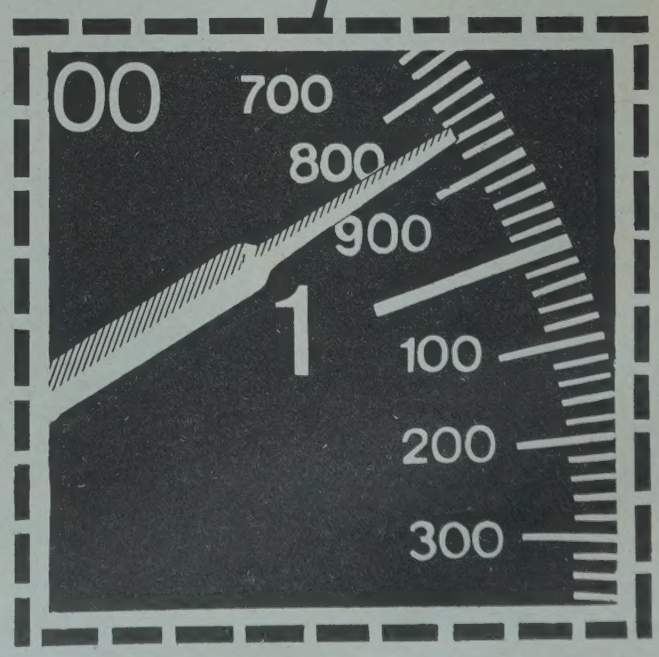

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4

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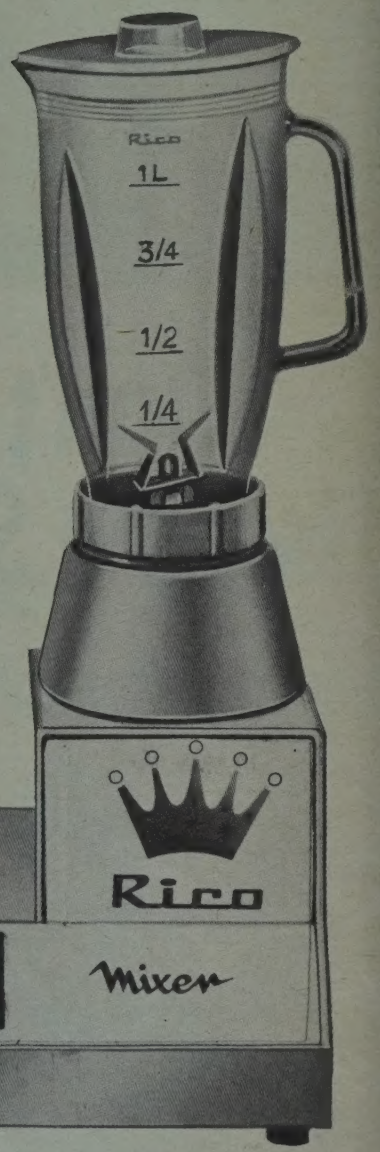

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Bracelene Cream is protein-based and provides a protective film to the skin from vagaries of nature and keeps it healthy and gives it a prolonged life.

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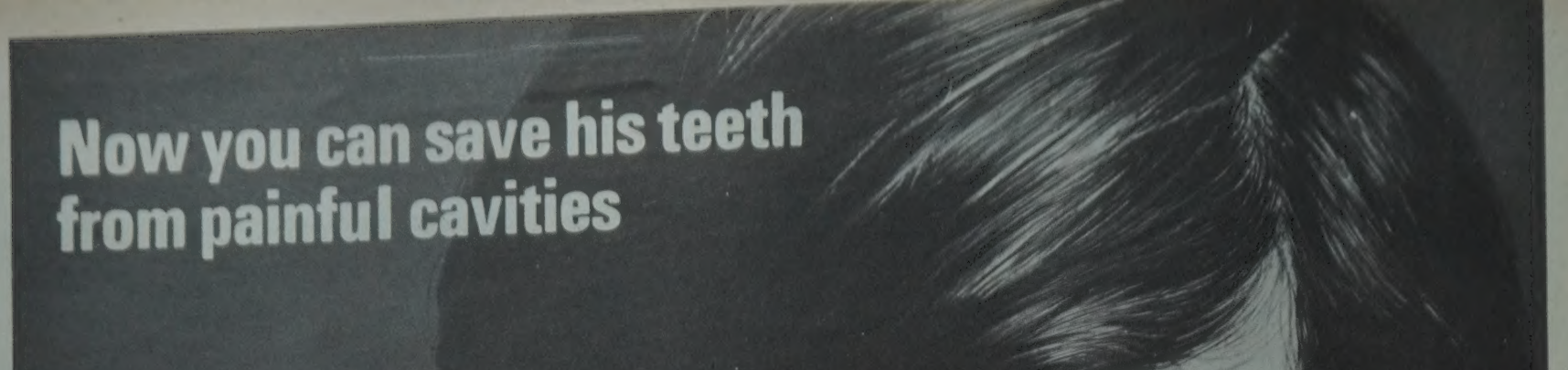
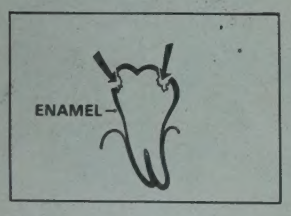


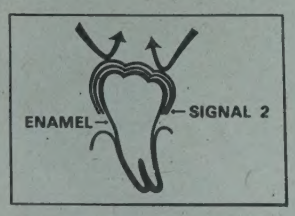
Get Signal 2

with the most effective Fluoride formula to harden teeth against decay

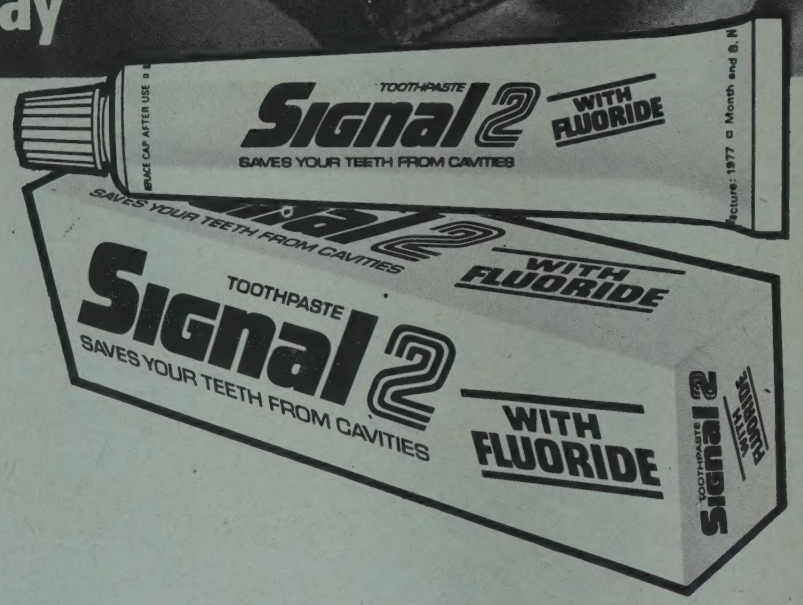
A toothache isn't just painful, it's a sign of tooth decay. Ignore it, and the decay goes deeper, leading to painful cavities.



Ordinary toothpastes can't stop mouth acids from penetrating teeth and causing decay.

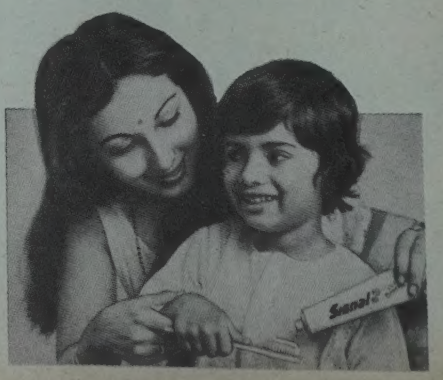


Signal 2 has the most effective fluoride formula to stop mouth acids from penetrating teeth and causing decay.



The cavity-fighter

Now, before it's too late, start your family on the toothpaste that is proven to fight tooth decay—Signal 2. Its special fluoride formula unites with the teeth to make them harder, more resistant to harmful mouth acids—and helps prevent cavities. No other toothpaste is better at fighting tooth decay.
Don't just take our word. Check with your dentist.



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BRUTE FORCE

Everyone has heard of that smart-alec saying (likely as not, coined by a male) : when rape is inevitable, lie back and enjoy it. It's so easy to be glib, but when one thinks of the sexual violence perpetrated on women, all over the world, it seems certain that men, despite their talk of "pedestals", treat women with contempt, and consider them the source of all sexual temptation and sin.

This Special Cover, with its overtones of fear and helplessness, tellingly expresses the personal humiliation of the victim. Sheer brute force succeeds in rendering the woman passive, shamed and dejected. Sexual intercourse forced on an unwilling woman is a sadistic perversion and yet, rape, the most virulent form of sexual violence, is treated with scant importance by society and the guardians of the law.

Visualiser : Panna Jain
Photograph : Farokh Reporter

VOL. XXXII NO. 19 BOMBAY

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PRINTER
R. S. SARANGAN

PRINTED & PUBLISHED AT
SANJ VARTAMAN PRESS
BOMBAY SAMACHAR MARG, BOMBAY-400 023

PROPRIETORS
EVE'S WEEKLY LTD., BOMBAY-400 023

CORRESPONDENTS

PUSHPA HANS
1-13, Lajpat Nagar 3, New Delhi-24.
TAPATI MOOKERJI
235/2, Acharya Jagadish Bose Rd.,Calcutta-20.
S. J. KURUVILLA
86/3 A, Purasswalkam High Road, Madras-10.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Inland Rs. 85, Foreign Rs. 127 (Sea Mail)

It has been said of our people, that they know too little about sex, and far too much about violence. This may seem too sweeping a statement, but on a closer look it seems to be true.

The Indian male may be adept at rape, torture, molestation and murder, but when it comes to sex, his knowledge and interpretation of it is woefully inadequate. Indeed, there appears to be a love-hate relationship between the Indian male and sex. To him, in a severely repressed society, sex is a forbidden fruit and, therefore, especially coveted. It is also dirty, furtive and worthy of his contempt. A paradox? Most certainly.

What is unfortunate, however, is that the focus of his contempt shifts from the abstraction of sex to the positiveness of the woman beside him. Pleasure is the aim — sex is the means. So far so good. But the moment that pleasure is denied or threatened, violence erupts and, of course, the target is almost always the woman.

More enlightened societies have, within the space of one generation, gone from sex as a dirty little secret to sex as one of the basic rights

SEX AND VIOLENCE

of man and woman. Here, pseudo-permissiveness and narrow-minded attitudes go hand-in-hand — the result is often explosive.

In this Special Issue, an attempt is made to lay bare the many forms and manifestations of sex, and violence through and because of sex. There is, naturally, a special slant on the position of women.

In a strongly patriarchal milieu, it is inevitable that woman would emerge "the beaten one." Scant attention, if any, is paid to her dignity, her desires, her individuality. As a victim of rape, she is oppressed; as a prostitute, she is oppressed; as a wife, too, she is oppressed. Demands are made on her which she cannot (or will not) fulfill. It has been said : "Ever since Adam and Eve lost their innocence, the world has accepted the universality and primacy of the sex drive. If you 'loved to lunge from the loins.' you were normal. If you didn't you weren't. But if you were troubled by sexual stirrings and you were a woman, you were not normal."

The hypocrisy of our social set-up is well-known. Genital-centred males have efficiently perpetuated myths as well as norms which have built false pedestals for women to which they are securely chained. Indeed, while we glibly talk of woman's liberation we sometimes forget that there must first be a man's liberation — from his libido, his ignorant attitudes, his false pride in his superiority and sexual prowess, his hang-ups.

Sex is sublime, violence is despicable. Once we develop and nurture an open, natural, relaxed attitude towards sex, ridding ourselves of unnecessary hang-ups, violence is bound to diminish, even destroy itself.

this week for you

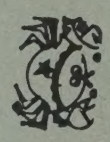
K. H. Shroff

For the week May 13 to May 19.

ARIES (March 21 — April 19) Active conditions help you achieve important positions. Undertaking of jobs proves successful. Favourable days: All days.

TAURUS (April 20 — May 21) Planet of money is favourable. Unavoidable expenses likely. Avoid haste in travel. Favourable days: 16 - 17.

GEMINI (May 22 — June 21) Optimism prevails. Travelling likely. Financial side favourable. Beneficial business d s and contracts promised. F. vourable days: 18 - 19.

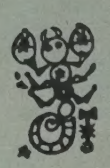


CANCER (June 22 — July 22) Luck favours throughout. Romantic attachments likely for unmarried people. Favourable days: All days.

LEO (July 23 — Aug. 23) 13 to 15 are forceful days for success in any field. Be cautious from 16th in matters concerning your interest. Favourable days: 18 - 19.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 — Sept. 22) Financial arrangements possible and money gains too. Virgoans have opportunity to qualify for higher degrees. Invigorating love affairs. Favourable days: 16 - 17.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 — Oct. 22) Luck favours. Especially artists have vigorous week to achieve recognition. Social meetings prove helpful. Favourable days: 18-19.

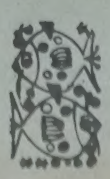


SCORPIO (Oct. 23 — Nov. 22) Caution, diplomacy and patience in judging all issues essential. Avoid law and controversial matters of each and every kind. Short trips away from residence shows less tension. Favourable days: 16 - 17.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 — Dec. 21) Cooperation from friendly associates bring money gains and advancement in status. Very bright week for correspondence and educational progress. Favourable days: All days.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 — Jan. 19) Help in career and profession. Physical and mental stamina strengthens. Caution necessary in travelling upto 15th. Favourable days: 16 - 17.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 — Feb 19) Difficult week. Everything is obstructed and delayed. Whatever good comes will be after having experienced tension. Take it easy. Favourable days: 18 - 19.



PISCES (Feb. 20 — March 20) Good luck in domestic area. Auspicious events and influential connections are revived. Favourable days: All days.

On Bombay's Dr. Annie Besant Road, the setting sun illuminates the round dome of the Nehru Planeterium and, beside it, a rose garden. Certainly, Bombay seems beautiful, clean and green and all the rest of it. Only, how far does this go? Unfortunately, nowhere at all. The planeterium obscures from view a sprawling slum complex, made up of five zhopadpatti colonies, whose residents have christened it the "mother-in-law" of Bombay's slums.

Here, in a slum called Subhash Nagar, on March 3, 1978, a young girl was brutally gang-raped. She was 18, pregnant, and had recently come from her U.P. village. She was carried off by a group of goondas after they gagged and beat up her husband. The neighbours watched and did nothing. The police were slow to act. The papers carried a microscopic item three weeks later.

Following the incident, 2,500 slum women marched in a morcha demanding retribution and facilities. For them, rape was an everyday occurrance, a constant danger, a threat which always lurked in the background and which was brought menacingly close by a total lack of facilities like latrines. But this was the first time they had admitted it. Rape and assault were not talked about, and never to the menfolk. Until one woman broke down, and another, and yet another, and social workers discovered with horror that this was no isolated incident. It happened all the time. And what more, was accepted — unquestioningly. Yet did the women really have an option? How do people react to rape?

Bombay's daily press, with a solitary exception, reacted by pretending that the morcha just hadn't taken place. The slum women lost out to an advertising morcha, which left from the same maidan half an hour later, and which was protesting about budget cuts.

ALL TOO BREEZILY DISMISSED

"Off the record," a police inspector confidingly told me, "between you and me, it's all cooked up, all cooked up. I tell you, she doesn't know if it was eight or nine men. Tell me, how does that sound?" Bad, I agreed.

A woman politician's reaction, "Oh, a slum rape. That happens all the time."

A lawyer laughed, "Rape is the easiest accusation to make."

The overall attitude — so big deal. An attitude that permeates all levels of society and which the press, as is its wont, faithfully reflects.

Is it surprising, then, that rape is among the least reported crimes, not only in India but also in the rest of the world? That to every one case reported, there are 10 to 12 unreported ones. And yet, in a city like Bombay in one year there were as many as 837 rape cases at one police hospital alone. The real number of cases is thus staggering. And calls for a re-examination of the phenomenon and a shedding of very many carefully cherished myths — about rape and about women.

Take the spontaneous reactions to rape for instance. "She must have asked for it," "Oh, she was probably a prostitute who didn't get paid," and that typical, terrible "She was a woman who changed her mind." Men, and women too, react the same way. The woman must have done something, they feel, "good" women don't get raped. Yes they do. The "good" and the "bad" both get raped. Getting raped is no comment on your "virtue" — contrary to what you have been made to believe. Yet sex mores being what they are, the result is that society — from the husband, to the law, to the police, to the victim herself — views the victim as the criminal rather than a person who has had a crime perpeterated against her.

GETTING ROUND IT WITH EUPHEMISMS

"All women actually want to be raped. They love it," is a fond male fantasy perpetrated by men, for men, against women. Rape only serves to measure man's strength — against woman's weakness. And reinforces the role she has always played — subservient, dominated, oppressed. An attitude which over time she has internalized and ceases to question and goes so far as to accept the "all women love rape" fantasy.

In a shattering **tour de force** entitled "Against Our Will — Men, Women and Rape," Susan Brownmiller examines the issue historically and shows how, over the ages, through the years, till today, rape has been a "conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear." And before you shrug it off as a senseless, sweeping generalization, read the book. See how she begins it by saying, "I wrote this book because I am a woman who changed her mind about rape." She thought like all of us did, and many still do, her reactions conditioned by society were identical to ours, questioning them was difficult, yet once the process began, it snowballed.

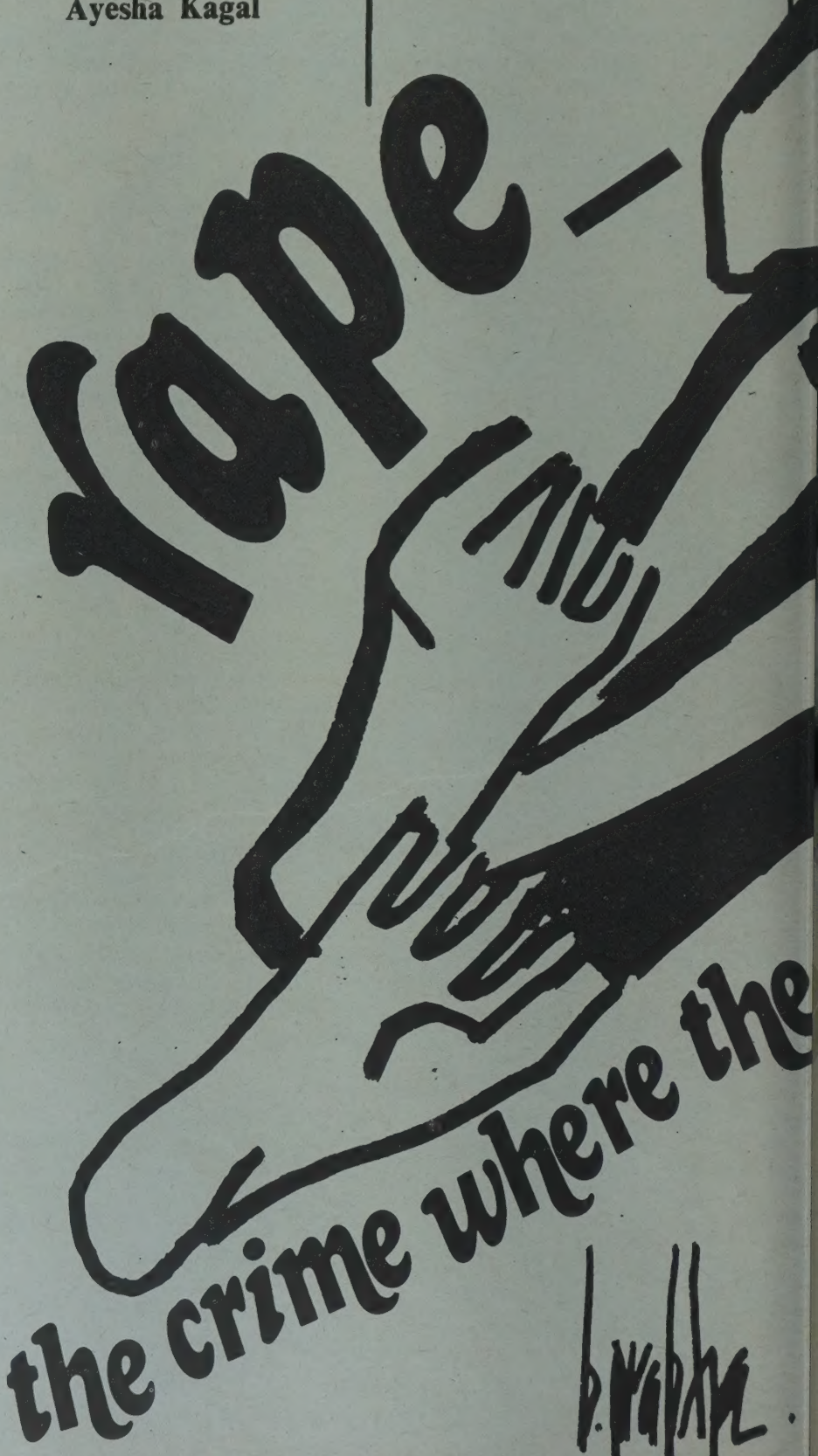
Brownmiller argues cogently, and backed with extensive examples and case studies, that "female fear of an open season of rape and not a natural inclination towards monogamy, motherhood or love was probably the single causative factor in the original subjugation of woman by man. . . the price she paid was the imposition of chastity and monogamy. . . Those who assumed the historic burden of protection extracted more than a pound of flesh. They reduced her status to that of a chattel."

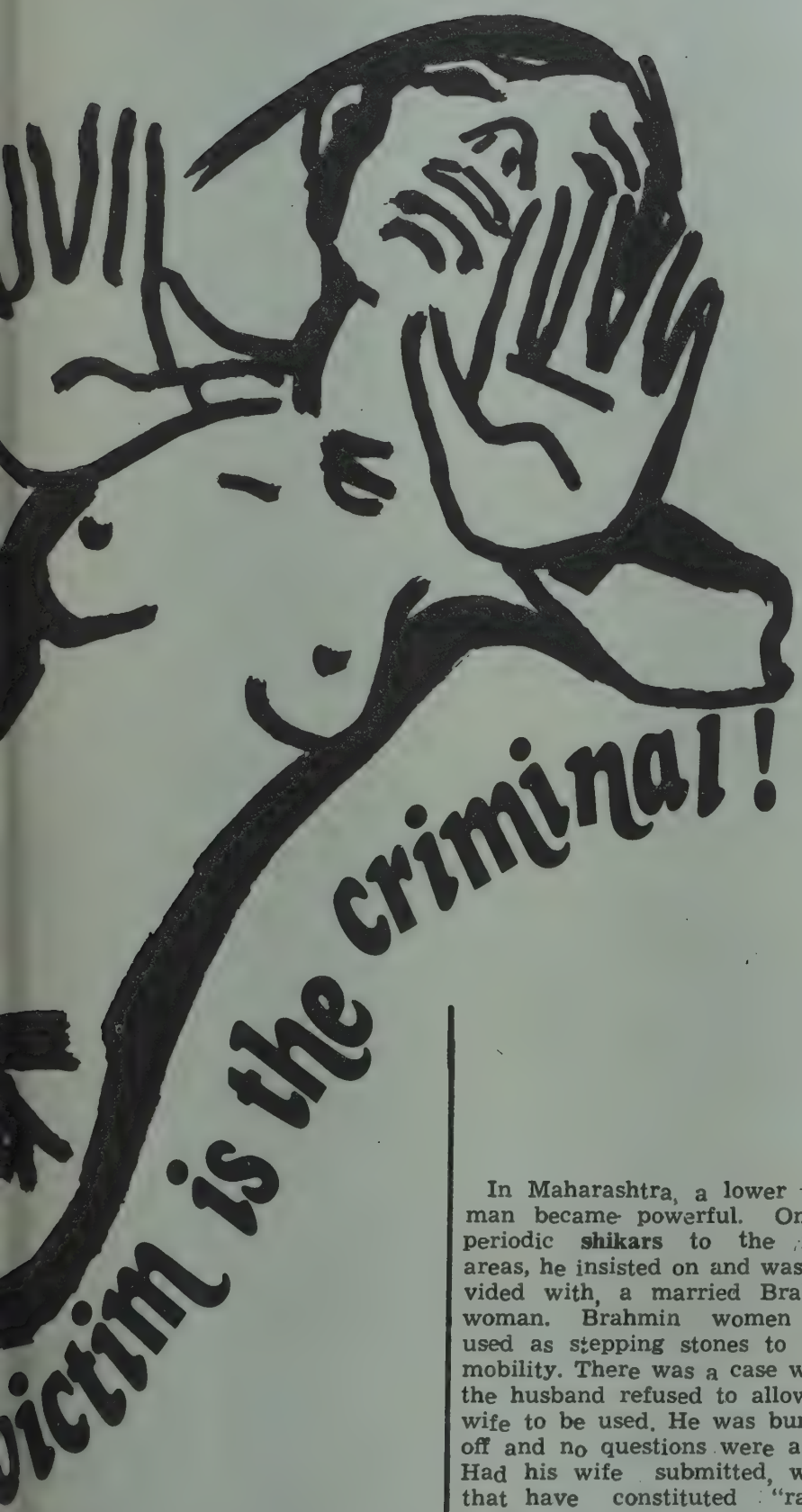
It happens all the time...a woman is raped and people say: "Oh, she must have asked for it."

Ayesha Kagal

Following which, rape has been regarded not so much as a crime against a woman but against her husband, not an outrage of her privacy, but a violation of his manhood. The slur is cast on his honour, on his lineage, on his pride. Her condition seems to pale into insignificance.

And being part of the property he owned, along with house, fields and cattle, woman has always been used to settle scores between men. Man proved his superiority over his rival by rap-





ing his wife, his daughter, his mother. Till today power equations continue to be chalked out by rape — the ultimate act of man's triumph over man is performed on the body of a woman. In war it is institutionalized — you conquer a city and you rape its women. They are part of the loot, the booty. Bangladesh, Vietnam, any war, any place.

As one sociologist points out, "Any oppressed group when obtaining power tends to acquire the females of the group that has been the oppressor." Eldridge Cleaver, radical black leader of the '60's became, as he himself acknowledges, a "rapist." Beginning with black girls, he "progressed" to white — did he really imagine he was being redressed for all the raped black slave women? Was that the answer to one set of crimes?

In Maharashtra, a lower caste man became powerful. On his periodic **shikars** to the rural areas, he insisted on and was provided with, a married Brahmin woman. Brahmin women are used as stepping stones to caste mobility. There was a case where the husband refused to allow his wife to be used. He was bumped off and no questions were asked. Had his wife submitted, would that have constituted "rape?" Probably not because it was "with her consent" though certainly "against her will." But in continuance with the narrow legal definition of what constitutes "rape", it is highly unlikely that the case would end in the conviction of the accused.

THE CLOAK OF AUTHORITY IS USED AND ABUSED

In fact, there are so many cases where one cannot even appeal in a court of law cases where rape occurs with frightening regularity. Where the cloak of authority is used, and abused, to exploit women sexually. Doctors in hospitals, employers in offices, policemen and jailors in prisons, masters in homes. . . The list is endless. . . Class is no protection as is believed. Rape knows no class barriers — only, those women already belonging to an oppressed class are more likely to be victims. Education also does not bring with it the emancipation to view the incident as a crime that should be fought. More often than not, the case is silently hushed up by those who have the influence. Those that don't in any case know that justice, for them, is not within reach. And so, not many cases surface. The few that do, get tied up and choked in a legal bramble.

THE LAW DOESN'T HELP EITHER

The law holds that rape is committed when a man has sexual intercourse with a woman

1) Against her will.

2) Without her consent.

3) With her consent when it has been obtained by putting her into fear of death or of hurt or by masquerading as her husband.

4) With or without her consent if she is under 16.

5) Intercourse with the wife if she is under 15 years old.

Under the law, therefore, a wife cannot sue her husband for rape unless she is separated. There is no "right of consent" for her.

One of the oft-quoted classics governing rape law is the statement which says rape is easily made, difficult to prove and more difficult to disprove. It is based on the assumption, as one medico-legal journal "Clinical Sexuality" by John Oliver points out, that there are a large number of "jilted, jealous-malicious paranoid, blackmailing women." Do not forget, the journal cautions, "Hell knoweth no fury like a woman scorned."

"Most of the cases I handled were false ones," begins a doctor, who was with a police hospital as deputy surgeon for a number of years. He proceeds to pull out an impressive tome and reads out a long list of the various things females do to themselves to register false cases. I would have believed him — before I read Brownmiller. She destroys the myth that rape has an inordinate number of false charges by quoting a case study where, on the first occasion, policemen had recorded statements and the second time, women had taken down the report. There was a substantial difference in the cases proved false when women were involved.

What carries a great deal of importance in a rape case is whether the crime was reported at the first possible opportunity." If it wasn't, the manuals and the people I met are all of the unanimous opinion that the charge is a stumped up one. Perhaps the victim doesn't share their confidence that she will be listened to sympathetically, may be she does not want to fall into either the "frustrated female" variety or the "insatiable nymphomaniac" one. The choice is limited.

Also, it has to be proved that the victim fought back to the utmost. If she was petrified and rendered immobile, she will be regarded as one of the "consenting till caught" variety. As Brownmiller asks, do people who are robbed or mugged have to prove that they fought tooth and nail? They might have been too terrified to.

Evidence beyond medical findings is also required, such as the testimony of eyewitnesses. All this adds up to the fact that the conviction rate of rape is extremely low. "Innocent until proved guilty" is not always a wise dictum if "proving guilty" is such an arduous task. And where considerations for the boy's future seems to play an important role. "He's young, foolish, hasty" is often the unconvincing rationalization heard. Most rapists are young and aggressive. The deranged sexual psycopath is not the average rapist, who is an unextraordinary person.

IS THERE NO ANSWER TO RAPE?

So, what is the answer to rape? Stock advice given to women is "don't invite trouble and you won't get it." Magazines list out a long list of do's and don'ts which boil down to don't dress the way you want to if it's 'inviting"; don't stay alone, it's fatal; don't go out alone after dark; do come home at a reasonable hour, preferably with an escort — i.e. put yourself in the hands of one male to make sure you're safe from the others. Alternately, or rather additionally, learn one of the martial arts.

The picture could be hilarious —if it weren't so tragic. As a student in Delhi University I remember girls would arm themselves with chilli powder and safety pins, terrified of being mauled on university "specials." But safety pins are not the answer. And neither is judo. Not long term answers anyway.

Only when man stops measuring his masculinity in terms of violating women; and only when women unite and give each other strength and sympathy, will the problem of rape ever be solved.

VIOLENCE IN HOMOSEXUALITY

Manohar S. Kamath

Victims of indecent homosexual assault are likely to undergo as traumatic an experience as those of rape

The word "Rape" evokes a great deal of sympathy and horror with its stigma attached to both the accused and the victim. Nobody, however, gives a thought to the humiliation and mental torture suffered by one who is "raped" by a person of his or her own sex — the event is invariably relegated to the records of some medico-legal journal.

The case of "B", a 12-year old boy, reveals this turn of events clearly. B came to a hospital in Bombay complaining that he had a painful swelling in the region of his anus. On examination, it was found that he had a condyloma — a cauliflowery veneral growth at the anus. Investigations revealed that he had been forced into homosexual relationships with three or four boys, much older than himself, in the past two months. Apparently, one of those boys had transmitted syphillis to B, who could not sit on his haunches without writhing in pain.

As per the requirements, the incident was recorded by the police and the boy was interrogated. Howevere, police investigations did not reveal much. So, ultimately, B was allowed to return home — and to his predators.

Though the events and technicalities regarding the two may be the same, there is no phrase such as "homosexual rape", since rape by definition involves a male and female. The technically correct term is "indecent homosexual assault" and, it has on the victim, socially, psychologically and medically, the same ill-effects as rape.

Though homosexuality is undoubtedly on the increase, the incidence of homosexual assault is not as high. Although most homosexuals gratify themselves with sodomy, it is very difficult for the active partner to penetrate the tight anal sphincter. Most assaults of this type usually occur by coercion of the victim by threats in various forms to force the victim to relax; or else, great force is used to overcome the sphincteric resistance.

Most cases of homosexual assault occur at places where male domination is supreme. It is commonest in hostels, prisons, dormitories, among urchins on the street and also in the armed forces and police. The assailants may either be compulsive homosexuals or do it "just for a lark". The practice of "ragging" in most college hostels may end in a "gang bang", when the tormentors ultimately force the victim into satisfying their homosexual appetites. Such incidents came into the limelight a few years ago at the Kanpur and Allahabad Universities; but more often than not, these cases are not reported and escape the notice of the authorities.

Another feature of homosexual assault is that it occurs more often on young children or teenagers (technically 'pedophilia'), who are both curious and willing to experiment. However, after undergoing the experience a couple of times, their minds are likely to undergo great turmoil, ultimately leaving them with, either, a guilt complex or arousing their latent homosexual tendencies.

The role of alcohol in homosexual assault should not be under-estimated, particularly since alcohol withdraws the inhibitions in a dormant homosexual.

Though lesbianism is as common as homosexuality, and forceful woman-to-woman attack for immoral purposes perhaps as common as homosexual assault, very rarely are complaints received for "lesbian assault". This is largely because there is usually no physical injury involved in these cases and, moreover, proving the case would be extremely difficult. It is interesting to note that there are no laws all over the world against lesbianism for precisely the same reason.

The procedure followed by the police and the medical officer in the case of a complaint of homosexual assault is much the same as for rape. One additional factor looked for by the Police Surgeon is the presence of a lubricant in both the accused and the victim, its use being almost universal in such cases.

Just as in rape, cases of homosexual assault are more often hidden from than reported to the proper authorities. The reasons are usually the same — social stigma being the prime factor. However, it is possible that the male victim can be persuaded to get over his experience as he is not "defiled" whereas the victim of rape having undergone a "physical change" finds it difficult to prevent the occurrence of a painful scar.

Homosexual assault can be as traumatic an experience as rape itself. A young person with all sorts of taboos about sex may be made to feel sexually inadequate or be filled with feelings of remorse and self-pity having undergoing the humiliation. The maximum damage of course, is to the ego — which undergoes a sudden, shattering letdown.

An unwilling homosexual relationship can also ruin the family life of a young man, particularly if the victim is a college student. To admit to one's family the "indecent" event that occurred can be the cause of tremendous negation of one's personality. The titters and jeers of friends (or just the thought of them) can even drive a person to suicide. The case of a young man in Sri Lanka who jumped out of his hostel room to his death after being forced to undergo sodomy is just one example of the serious predicament victims find themselves in.

Violence in homosexuality can take some bizarre forms. One such, which is often practiced in America is "pyromania" — an urge to set fire to the establishment in which the homosexual partner works or lives by a jilted homosexual lover. Psychiatrists say that such individuals get tremendous sexual satisfaction in seeing the place go up in flames. The loss of life and property that could occur in such circumstances makes this sort of individual a great menace to society as a whole. The practice, fortunately, has not yet been reported in India.

Assault and murder are relatively common phenomena among homosexuals. The common motivating factors behind these are either fear of exposure or jealousy when the partner switches his attention to another homosexual or to heterosexual relationships. A couple of years ago, a carpenter who tried to force his assistant into "having some fun" in Bombay, was taken aback by his refusal and subsequently murdered him for fear of a public relevation of his attempts.

Robbery and blackmail are equally strong motives behind some homosexual assaults. These often turn violent when either the frustrated and disappointed assailant or the tormented victim decide to force their opponent's hand by an act of aggression. The case is quoted of an unemployed man who was picked up on the streets of Bombay by a stranger, taken to his residence and asked to submit to sodomy at knife-point. The man resisted, overpowered his attacker and in the struggle that ensued, murdered his tormentor in a fit of rage. Those hijras (often passive partners in homosexual relationships) who forcibly castrate young men to add one more to their clan often drive these men to violent death. In such cases, the victim either bleeds to death, gets a severely virulent infection or dies of shock.

Medico-legal experts feel that very few incidents of violent homosexual acts are brought to the notice of the authorities and the cases noted are just a minute fraction of the total cases that do occur. It is significant, however, that the law does not differentiate between rape and homosexual assault when it comes to sentencing the guilty. In both types of cases, as per Sections 376 and 377 of the Indian Penal Code respectively, the sentence may vary from ten years to life imprisonment and/or a stiff fine.

As Dr. Pritam Phatnani, an authority on Medical Jurisprudence puts it, "Homosexuality and crimes associated with it are kept in the dark much too often in this country, because of the various taboos in our society. It is important to realise that every person passes through a stage of homosexuality one way or the other. Only a few persist with the trait later on in life."

It is only when this home-truth is realised by everybody that the violence associated with homosexuality can be curbed and the wrongdoers brought to book.

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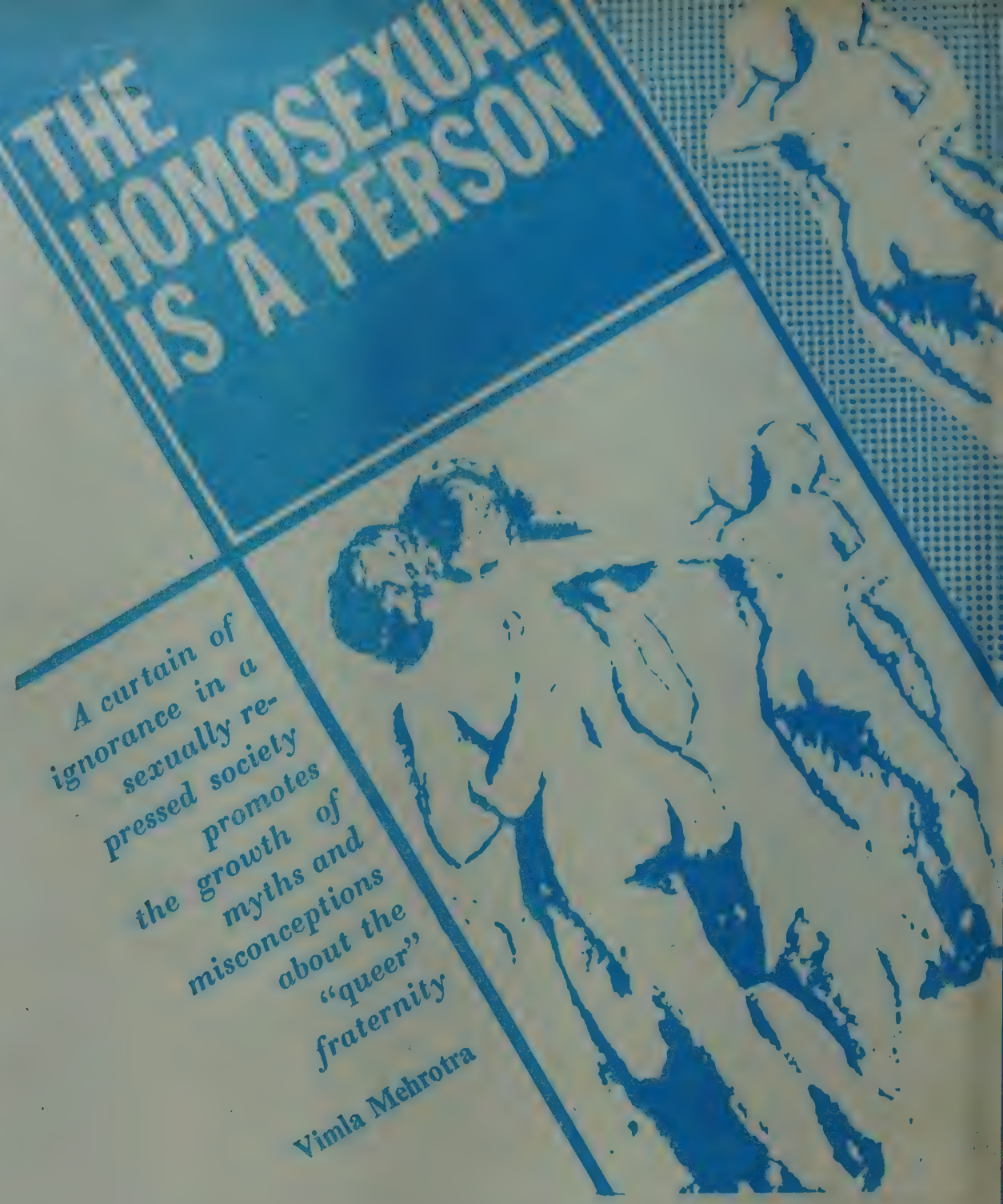
THE HOMOSEXUAL IS A PERSON



A curtain of ignorance in a sexually repressed society promotes the growth of myths and misconceptions about the "queer" fraternity

Vimla Mehrotra

Ask a friend "Do you know anybody who is a homosexual?" "Of course not!" comes the reply. "Those things only happen in America, not here!"

Approach the counter of a bookstall enquiring, "I'd like to see some books on homosexuality." The attendant looks a little baffled, blinks his eyes, looks around to see you're the only customer in the shop, then reveals a pile of pornographic books.

Interview a psychiatrist on the subject. He proceeds to talk about orgies, fetishism, sado-masochism and even bestiality, only reluctantly conceding that these may or may not be linked to homosexual behaviour.

This, then, sums up the general public's impression of homosexuals — either they do not exist, or they are part of an underworld indulging in wierd, unnatural practices far removed from everyday living.

Nothing could be further from the truth. A curtain of ignorance in a sexually repressed society provides fertile ground for the growth of myths and misconceptions. Restrained curiosity finds expression in wildly imaginative speculations often based on little more than emotional attitudes. In the process it is easy to forget that the homosexual is, first of all, a person, albeit a person with a hang-up, whose lifestyle is an attempt to cope with his hang-up in the context of the prevailing social mores.

The first myth that needs to be exploded is that homosexuality does not exist in India and that it is a by-product of twentieth century Western society. Though no scientific assessment of numbers can be made for India, social and behavioural scientists concede that a sizable proportion of Indian males have experimented with homosexuality and that many continue to have sex relations with persons of their own sex.

Another popular misconception is that a homosexual is a delicate-looking man, wearing pink flowery shirts, talking in a high-pitched voice and affecting effeminate mannerisms. Lesbians are imagined to be tall, strapping women with harsh features and close-cropped hair, sporting mannish attire. In reality, only a small sprinkling of homosexuals and lesbians would fit this description. The majority look, act and dress like anybody else and would hardly stand out in a crowd. Most hold regular jobs or may be professionals. Several are married with children and live in dread of their clandestine escapades being discovered.

One government officer whom we shall call Mathew says, "I am married with two children. I have a government-allotted flat and car, and to all appearances lead what is generally considered a normal life. Every Friday I spend the evening with men friends drinking and playing flush or rummy. This is all pretty straight. Little do my wife or friends suspect that on the way home after these Friday night sessions I pick up a male prostitute for a quick bash in the car. This has become almost compulsive for me, though afterwards I'm invariably seized with a terrible anxiety. What if someone passing by recognized the car and saw what I was doing! My God! I could lose my wife, my children, my job, my social standing, everything! It would be the end of the world for me."

Like Mathew, many homosexuals live a shadow existence. But for others there exists a kind of parallel society — groups of people loosely linked by friendship and sexual interest. They meet socially at parties, bars, restaurants and even a gay club is reported to have been formed in Bombay. Mingling with other persons having similar inclinations helps ease the tension of living a dual existence and also bear with the sense of alienation from the mainstream of society. In a way, identification with the group functions as a mutual support system to cope with the stigma of being a "queer."

The most blatant feature of the gay lifestyle is the expectation that sex can be had without obligation or even temporary commitment. Sex remains a purely physical act, delinked from affection, and is impersonal and promiscuous. Sometimes it gratifies needs for status, power and recognition. While homosexuals may have role preferences, they do not always fall into "active" and "passive" groups, and may assume a variety of roles with the same or with different partners. Dr. Prakash Kothari, a consultant in sexual medicine, reports that less than 25 per cent of his homosexual clients engage in sodomy, or anal intercourse. The majority indulge in oral and manual stimulation, or simulate intercourse by intercrural methods — i.e. between the thighs.

Some well-known hunting grounds, such as beaches and gardens, are primarily market places for sexual contact. Group sex is not uncommon. Often sex comprises a "quickie" on the beach, or in a garden, or in the men's room of hotels, with the partners knowing little about each other beyond the first names.

The obvious keynote of this kind of lifestyle is a brooding loneliness. Said 47-year-old Arjun, "You go through an unending chain of one night stands. Every night you go to the park or the beach, make a contact, have furtive sex, then fade away into the darkness. You can't afford to fall in love nor are you going to be loved, and you know this. Yet you keep at it night after night for want of an alternative.

Many dream of enjoying a meaningful relationship with a person of their own sex but at the same time are afraid of such a relationship because of the possibility of being hurt when the relationship comes to an end as it invariably does. A deep-rooted fear of trusting people with intimate emotions tends to make them loners, sometimes consciously or unconsciously sabotaging relationships that threaten to become meaningful. Thus they retreat to a life of casual contacts that are deliberately kept meaningless so that they cannot hurt deeply.

Not that stable relationships are unknown. Many of the more emotionally mature individuals do manage to establish long-lasting relationships in which sexuality is integrated into personal and social life. This might involve living together, splitting expenses, socializing as a couple, as well as sex relations—much the same as in man/woman marriage. Yet, possibly because of social and legal sanctions, these relationships tend to lack the emotional security implicit in marriage. Insecurities sometimes surface in unreasonable jealousy causing them to view all other persons of the same and opposite sex as potential threats.

Stable relationships tend to be mo

common among lesbians than among male homosexuals. Generally lesbians appear to place greater emphasis on the quality of interpersonal relations, while homosexuals place greater emphasis on the sexual aspect of the relationship, in a way paralleling the male/female patterning in society.

If lesbianism is less common than homosexuality, it is probably because women tend to value goals like family, security and child-rearing more than pure sex. Many drift into marriage without examining their sexual responses, and when unable to be aroused by their husbands, frigidity is accepted without questioning its cause. Of crucial importance is the fact that a woman can have sexual intercourse without desire. A woman may submit herself to a sex life which is meaningless to her and still manage to hide her discontent. This can add to conscious and unconscious self-deception about possible latent lesbian feelings. A man, on the other hand, requires the preliminary presence of desire to achieve erection. Sex and desire become intrinsically interlinked and attempts at self-delusion result in ego-shattering humiliation.

The knowledge that someone in the family is a homosexual throws the entire family quite out of gear. Sometimes the circumstances under which the revelation comes to light are traumatic enough, as in the case of a young girl whose arranged marriage was broken off when it was found that her father was a homosexual. Most families take endless pains to conceal the homosexuality from the outside world while embarking on fruitless journeys to seek cures.

For some, this involves a series of pujas, ashrams and gurus in an attempt to "exorcise the devil." Others try to get the person married in the hope that "he will outgrow it after marriage." Yet others trudge from psychiatrist to doctor begging them to "inject him with more masculine hormones." They refuse to accept the doctors' assurance that the hormone levels of homosexuals are quite normal and any increase of the male hormone, testosterone, may increase the desire for sex but is unlikely to change the direction in which the desire is likely to be channelized. Writing to comfort the distraught mother of a homosexual, Sigmund Freud said, "Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation and it cannot be classified an illness. We consider it a variation of sexual development."

Sometimes a brother or sister of the same generation may be more accepting than parents. Reeta, a rather liberated college student said, "My sister is only two years older than me and we have always been very close. When I began this relationship with an older woman it seemed only natural to tell her about it. After all, we had always talked about our boyfriends. Of course she was terribly upset. For a while I think she even considered telling our parents. She was really concerned for me. What shocked her most was not just that I had been seduced by a woman, but that I had enjoyed it and was planning to see the woman again. Right now, she's still very confused but she's beginning to accept it. I think she thinks of it as a phase I'll outgrow."

Which raises some fundamental questions. Do homosexuals want to change to heterosexual behavior? Is it desirable to attempt to reverse the homosexual pattern? What is the prognosis for being able to achieve a successful re-orientation towards heterosexuality?

Dr. Kothari maintains that in his experience of working with homosexuals, both in the United States and in India, he has never encountered a case where the individual was experiencing a real desire for change. The same view is held by Mrs. Karnik, the head social worker at the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine of Nair Hospital, Bombay. She reports that all her cases are referred either by the family, or by doctors, or by welfare officers connected to industrial establishments. Those individuals who come for help directly, do so not for homosexuality itself but for other problems such as depression, alcoholism and difficulties in interpersonal relations. Homosexuality comes to be revealed only incidentally and no desire for change is expressed.

Since socially sanctioned sexual behaviour differs greatly among different cultures, what may be considered abnormal is not necessarily unnatural or detrimental to the individual involved. The argument that homosexuality is against the laws of nature loses ground when it is observed that homosexual patterns are exhibited by several species of primates including monkeys, dogs and rats. Evidence of homosexuality exists from the earliest records of man and neither social strictures nor legal constraints have been able to wipe it off the face of the earth.

Psychologists draw a strong correlation between the family patterns of homosexuals. The presence of a strong, over-protective, slightly seductive mother, combined with a weak, indifferent or sometimes absent father sets the stage for a mixed-up pattern of indentification. In Anna Freud's opinion, male homosexuality is a search for masculine identity through identification with a partner of the same sex. Sigmund Freud speculated that while the sex instinct is innate, the choice of a sex object is more likely to be determined by developmental factors in childhood. Adult homosexuality is not a question of conscious decision and choice. Rather it is the outgrowth of developing responses to a different set of sexual stimuli where childhood experiences have disrupted the standard pattern. Efforts to reverse this pattern involve a heavy toll in terms of emotional conflict, for which the prognosis can, at best, be uncertain.

Many homosexuals approach therapy when they are confronted with the prospect of entering a heterosexual marriage because of social or family obligations. They face a very real fear of inadequate sexual functioning with the wife. Speaking of the negative aspect of sex in such a marriage, Dr. Kothari says repeated exposure to sexual trauma which bruises the homosexual's already fragile ego can do irreparable damage, creating a further sense of devaluation, and can affect the individual's functioning in other major areas of life. Professional and vocational achievements are seen as non-achievements, paranoid resentments seek irrational outlets and marriage could prove destructive even before it gets off the ground. Treatment becomes extremely difficult as sex begins to be associated with anxiety which blocks natural responses. The sex act takes on the tone of a physical feat.

The therapist's first job is to determine the individual's goal — i.e. does he want to give up homosexuality or simply work towards having successful relations with his wife. Research indicates that 25-50 per cent of strongly motivated, disturbed homosexuals are able to develop adequate heterosexual functioning. Some experience only minor difficulties in sexual relations with the wife. For others, long-term therapy may be necessary. However, few want to, or are able to, give up homosexual practice.

Mrs. Karnik recalls a 17-year-old boy referred to her from the surgical department of the hospital where he had undergone an operation for prolapse of the anal muscles as a result of repetitive sodomy. In her opinion, the most reprehensible offenders are "dirty old men" who seduce young boys and even children without stopping to consider that the scars from such encounters remain indelibly inprinted on the young mind. "I could see that Rajesh had no attraction towards women and had no desire to develop any. Yet I could sense that he was deeply troubled. His promiscuity was the result of a constant search for 'the right partner' which made him quite indiscriminate. He had to be taught to put a value on himself even as a sex object and to choose his partners judiciously. Therapy took more than two years. Eventually he managed to get involved with a man who even gave him a job."

This approach has the support of both psychologists and social scientists who are of the opinion that if an individual is gratifying emotional and sexual needs in a positive homosexual relationship, he is better off than being without any satisfying relationship or being involved in a destructive heterosexual one. "Our concern is for the individual. He comes to us as a person, without a label. We try to help him find a social niche within the context of his built-in limitations—the maximum we can hope to do."

VIOLENCE IN A SEXIST SOCIETY

Jeroo Gorimar

Man is the predator, woman is the prey. In a pernicious and sexual caste system, no strata of society is immune—from 'high society' to the pavement dweller

The earliest recorded law, the Code of Hammurabi, made plain by its omissions that in ancient Babylon women had no independent status. The stern Talmudic law of the Jews, from which the Christians derived their Ten Commandments, censures adultery and lumps the neighbour's wife with his house, fields, ox, and ass. The Muslims sanction polygamy but strongly disapprove of a woman associating with more than one man.

In India, a woman enjoyed a measure of equality in Vedic times, but ever since she has either been put on a pedestal or treated as a footrest. Today, every avenue of power is entirely in male hands and though groups who rule by birthright are fast disappearing, the sexual caste system remains. As Mrs. Chandra Dave, one-time medical social worker and now managing editor of the journal, "International Social Work", notes, "The genesis of man's cruelty to woman can probably be traced to the basic difference between the sexes—a man can rape but a woman cannot."

As man is biologically structured to be the predator and the woman, the prey, violence against women is as old as time and can take many forms. From the lewd glance and the muttered obscenities on a crowded city street to the more innocuous sexual perversions like exhibitionism and voyeurism, and from sadism and child molestation to gory sexual crimes like rape and lust murder. According to one sexologist, even normal sex can be an expression of violence if it is an assertion of mastery and power by the man upon the female from whom he expects total surrender, service and satisfaction.

"Wine, women and wealth are the three main causes of crime," says Dr. Pritam Phatnani, head of the medical education department of Glaxo and one-time coroner surgeon. "There is little organised crime here," he says and most cases of sexual assault and murder are committed "on the spur of the moment; out of jealousy, suspicion of a wife's infidelity, adultery or marital disharmony." In Bombay, the incidence of sexual offences has nearly doubled from 1970 to 1977 and "20 times as many go unreported," Dr. Phatnani reveals. "No strata of society is immune—from 'high society' to the pavement dweller."

From the cases he has handled, Dr. Phatnani concludes that rape and sexual assault are often committed under the influence of alcohol, though not always. "The victim may be anyone who happens to be there. Age is no bar—from eighteen months to sixty years." Fairly common, according to him, is the rape of the mistress by the servant or the assault on the maid by the male employer. "Sadhus who take

Suicide or murder—the conclusion is rarely reported. But woman-burning is an all too common crime.

shelter in a rich man's house have been known to molest the wife or daughter and then plead impotence when they are arrested." Female children and young girls are often violated by old neighbours and relatives, reveals the doctor.

Leaving aside the more gory handiwork of psychopaths like the Bombay hacker, Raman Raghav, who confessed to 41 murders and the rape of several old women and children, women apparently don't have the right to say "no," if incidents of sexual offences are any indication. Thirty-five-year-old call girl, Myrtle Montegomerry, was pushed out of the window of an eighth floor apartment by a Yugoslav national (who was subsequently sentenced to 'life imprisonment), for refusing to submit to sadistic sexual practices. In another instance, a 25-year-old girl was reportedly murdered because she spurned the "love" of a married man, R. D. Singh, a friend of the murdered girl's father. What often goes unreported in the press but comes to light from the examination of police files, are murders accompanied with sadistic sexual overtones.

Dr. Jehangir Kohiyar, consultant psychiatrist, refers to the case of a 17-year-old girl murdered by a young man, who was discovered with knitting needles in her vagina. "Such cases are expressions of sexualised resentment and aggression against the woman — more specifically against the mother figure or the sister figure," says Dr. Kohiyar. Aggression of this nature often compensates for a feeling of inferiority, he feels.

"To some extent, any perversion or deviation from the heterosexual sex act shows resentment or anxiety about forming normal relationships," says Dr. Kohiyar. Voyeurs, exhibitionists, child molesters "are inadequate people who cannot relate with adults." A man who exposes himself to an old lady at a bus wants to shock, upset and attract; "he is expressing both like and dislike towards the woman." Similarly, a rapist is often a man unable to form acceptable relationships, who tries to establish his male virility in an immature way," he says. A peculiarly Indian phenomenon, and more common than physical violence, is verbal abuse of women during the sexual act, notes Dr. Kohiyar.

Aside from deviant individuals, Dr. Kohiyar admits that a sexist society where women are treated as mere sex objects may promote violence against women. Not surprisingly, therefore, women very rarely commit sex crimes and aggression coupled with sex is almost only found among men, according to both. Drs. Phatnani and Kohiyar. Women are more likely to ration or withdraw sexual favours as an expression of resentment, or murder "in anger due to jealousy and frustration."

The psychiatrist ascribes the rareness of sexual crimes among women to the fact that the young child, whether male or female, is most dependant on the mother for the satisfaction of his needs. Thus, early frustrations and satisfaction are associated with the mother. If emotionally deprived, the man expresses resentment against the mother figure through other women in his life.

As pernicious as sexual assault is sexual exploitation, directed particularly against working women. "Whether she is a teacher, a professional, factory worker, executive, waitress or clerk, is irrelevant," says a medical social worker. Exploitation may be practiced by men who have the power to hire or fire, promote or demote, give a raise or deny it. A woman seeking advertisement space for a magazine was reportedly cajoled to sell her favours. A model or an air hostess is often subjected to the

Continued on page 19

The dead body of Myrtle Montegomerry, the victim in the infamous "Colaba call girl case."

On mere suspicion of infidelity, this woman's husband first attempted slitting her throat and finally strangled her, at the same time leaving teeth marks on her cheek.

Photographs and sketch, courtesy: Dr. Pritam Phatnani

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APHRODISIACS— do they work?

Sunil Shanbag

Magical sexual powers are attributed to some drugs, powders and pills which are actually more harmful to the body than of help to its sexual drive

From ancient times man has believed that certain foods or drugs have the inherent capacity to stimulate sexuality and to increase sexual desire and prowess. These substances are commonly known as aphrodisiacs, the name being derived from Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and fertility, born from the sea. Despite the fact that modern science has proved beyond doubt that no such food or drug has a direct sexually stimulating effect, popular opinion in many modern civilisations still dwells in ignorance. People everywhere are still deceived by quacks and pseudo-sexologists, out for some quick money, into buying and consuming sex tonics guaranteed to have effect on the person's sexuality and sexual prowess.

Aphrodisiacs are aimed at three different areas of the body. There are those such as alcohol, **bhang**, cocaine and opium that alter the mental state of the consumer. Then there are others such as Spanish Fly and a certain kind of red powder used among the Arabs made up of cinnamon, hot mustard, pepper, ginger and other substances that cause irritation in the bladder and urethral passage which may indirectly lead to sexual stimulation.

The third area at which aphrodisiacs are aimed at are the blood vessels, which substances such as **Amyl Nitrate** and **Yohimbine** derived from the bark of the Yohimbine tree found in some parts of Africa, cause to dilate, or widen, thereby increasing the flow of blood in the genital organs.

All the above-mentioned drugs have been proved to be more harmful to the body than beneficial to its sexual drive. The Unani system of medicine looks upon these drugs with disapproval and so does the Ayurvedic.

Shops dealing in these can be found quite commonly in areas such as Bhendi Bazaar and Null Bazaar in Bombay. They openly display boards in Hindi and Urdu advertising their pills and powders. Dr. Habib Mohammed Khan, a Unani doctor said that these pills usually have opium or morphia as their base. All they do is to numb the senses and distort time consciousness so that three to four minutes stretch out into twenty minutes.

Dr. Prakash Kothari, an eminent sexologist describes quite comprehensively the side effects of commonly known aphrodisiacs and also succeeds in exposing the superstitions behind their use.

In an article on sex tonics in a medical magazine, he explains how, for example, alcohol, the most commonly used aphrodisiac, works. Alcohol appears to stimulate a person sexually, but what it usually does is "to depress the person's inhibitions, fears of inadequacy and anxiety which may have otherwise interfered with the sex act." Also "a slight overdose would actually hamper the erective ability of a person and abolish all sexual reflexes." Chronic alcoholics can suffer from irreversible damage to the brain and nerves and this could lead to impotence.

Dr. Kothari then goes on to Amyl Nitrate, inhaled as orgasm is approached. However, Dr. Kothari points out that Amyl Nitrate "is not without potential toxicity." It could cause a drop in the blood pressure of the body accompanied by severe headaches and dizziness and even death.

Modern development in science has ushered in the use of hormones for aphrodisiac effect. These hormones are injected into the body which is not too effective, or taken orally. Most people who increase their hormone level in this manner do not realise the serious implications of its use when there is no real imbalance in the normal level of male sex hormones in the body.

Consuming hormones indiscriminately leads to several types of ailments in the liver, the heart, and reduces the number of sperm in semen. An Ayurvedic medicine manufacturing firm has a particular brand of their hormone pills dominating their total sales figures. What works is probably the use of a galloping horse as a symbol on the advertisements Some others use the bull as a symbol. Therefore, suggestion plays a more important part in bolstering the person's sexual desire rather than the true contents.

For too long man has attributed magical sexual powers to foods such as eggs, oysters, caviare, crab meat and to things that resemble the phallus such as the horn of a rhino or the Chinese plant, Ginsen, without any scientific basis for this belief. Medical practitioners and quacks often take advantage of this false belief and help strengthen this belief. It is important, therefore, for people to refuse to believe in the powers of these aphrodisiacs and understand that the best aphrodisiac one can ever have is a "sensuous, compatible and understanding partner."

VIOLENCE IN A SEXIST SOCIETY

Continued from page 17

deliberate lecherous look and touch. The life of a village school teacher who resisted the advances of one of the powerful local bosses was reportedly made "hellish, socially, at work and all round."

What about the married woman who supposedly has security, respectability and social status? According to a senior medical social worker, attached to one of the teaching hospitals in Bombay, "Friction with the husband, beating, and alcoholism are a part of a woman's life, especially if she belongs to the lower income group. The girl normally puts up with it because she feels the husband is her lord and master. The husband's attitude is that the girl has been bought and she is his property." Younger girls, she reveals, are especially beaten in the early years of marriage to establish the husband's supremacy and if a woman cannot bear a child, her life becomes "hellish, because Indian males are so obsessed with virility and having a male heir," she says. A tyrannical mother-in-law and poverty may be added tribulations which may "ultimately drive her to either prostitution or suicide."

In fact, a 1962 survey of prostitutes in Bombay's red-light district reveals that it is a woman's emotional and economic dependence on men which is the fundamental support of prostitution and that most prostitutes had entered the profession at a time when they were alone, without parental or male protection, and were emotionally upset. Wives thrown out for barrenness or to make place for the husband's mistress; wives who had run away to escape physical and mental ill-treatment by the husband and the in-laws; girls without dowries, married off to much older or sick men, or at a very young age, are potential candidates.

Similar circumstances may drive a woman to end her life; according to a survey conducted by the Gujarat Committee of Suicide Inquiry, which was investigating the reasons for the notoriously high rate of female suicide in the state. Every eight hours one woman in Gujarat reportedly commits suicide and one suicide out of seven is due to the mother-in-law's tyranny; no fewer than 3,259 women ended their lives in 1969, according to police reports.

And as feminist Kate Millet notes in her book, Sexual Politics, "Sex is deep at the heart of our troubles ... and unless we eliminate the most pernicious of our systems of oppression, unless we go to the very centre of the sexual politics and its sick delirium of power and violence, all our efforts at liberation will only land us again in the same primordial stews

INDIAN PENAL CODE SECTIONS INVOLVING SEXUAL OFFENCES

SECTION	OFFENCE	PUNISHMENT
294	OBSCENE ACTS	3 MONTHS / FINE
312 - 316	CRIMINAL ABORTION	LIFE TERM / 10YRS. / 7YRS. / FINE
354	INDECENT ASSAULT	2 YRS. / FINE
366	KIDNAPPING OR ABDUCTING FOR IMMORAL PURPOSE	7 YRS. / FINE
372 - 373	SELLING OR BUYING A MINOR FOR PROSTITUTION	10 YRS. / FINE
375 - 376	RAPE	LIFE TERM / 10 YRS. / FINE
377	UNNATURAL SEXUAL OFFENCES	LIFE TERM / 10 YRS. / FINE
497	ADULTERY (ONLY MALE)	5 YRS. / FINE
511	ATTEMPT TO COMMIT ANY OF THE ABOVE OFFENCES	1/2 OF LONGEST TERM / FINE

TWO FACETS OF Piramal

COTTONS

SYNTHETICS

Piramal Mills

Maheshwari Mills

prem

Vijay Tendulkar

(Freely translated by SHANTARAM CHITTAR from the Marathi original.)

I am feeling very, very light today. Almost weightless. Not for many, many, years have I felt such light-headedness, such intoxicating emptiness.

How shall I describe it? It is as if the heavy weight of hours has suddenly rolled off from me, or as if a fever raging in blood and brain has suddenly disappeared. It is as if the 'kick' of a strong wine has shot me upwards from the deepest fit of perturbation and transfixed me in the crystalline clarity of mid-space. Well, it is something like that — and also not quite.

A reasonably accurate description of my state in words is not possible. At least, not today. Not at this moment.

I am free today. Sitting alone in the car which has known our togetherness, yours and mine, so well. I have parked it in a position from where I can see the Nursing Home in which you are lying. I can even see the window of your room. Not that I can identify the particular window, but from here I can see all the windows of the Nursing Home and one of those windows must belong to your room. A white curtain on every window and, beyond it, a dazzling white room. There, lying on a shiny new cot, on a white mattress and under the whitest of sheets, is your pale, lily-white form. A rhapsody in white? Or a white sepulchre? Could be either, according to one's mood.

At any time in the past, I would not have lost a second in finding out which of the windows curtained off your room. I would have been hovering by your bedside with my heart turning somersaults, would have quarrelled with the management about the arrangements, however good, and demanded special facilities. I would have gone berserk at the slightest inadequacy in treatment, real or imagined. And yet there would have been a gnawing dissatisfaction in my mind that something remained to be done.

And it had always been thus. Nothing but the best was good enough where you were concerned. I would not tolerate anything a whit less. Only the very best, the final and the ultimate in everything for you, dearest. Because I loved you so deeply. With every atom and fibre of my being. Not wisely, but too well, like Othello? It is not for me to judge. But true it is that love had become a fever in my blood. Love chained me and sat upon me and weighted me down like an intolerable burden. Love had become my sole and ceaseless occupation, encompassing every minute of the day and night. Twenty four hours of the day were not enough for it, nor the thirty days of the month, nor the twelve months of the year. I was indentured to the love ethic as some are indentured to the work ethic.

Oh God, how the years have passed. Eight years have gone, gone with the wind, swept away like so many straws on the Niagara. To be exact, it would be eight years, five months and thirteen days today. We were married on the eleventh of July, at four minutes past eleven in the morning. Right now it is thirty four minutes past eleven....and seven seconds...eight...nine...ten. My mind stands completely still, outside time as it were, and yet makes these calculations of minutes and seconds. It is now exactly two hours, seventeen minutes and thirty two seconds since you were removed to the Nursing Home. That makes it nearly three hours since I looked upon you for the last time. It was nearing seven-fifty, according to my watch, when I came out of the front door of our flat. I looked at my watch and went down the lift. For the last time. Never to return.

"...My giving you up is now the only reality, as my possessing you was once the only reality . . ."

It is all so strange and yet, strangely, expected too; almost as if it had been planned to the last awesome detail. I have been nothing if not thorough in everything I ever did, and the thoroughness with which I once loved you is present here to the end. I am a perfectionist. I brook no default or inadequacy in the things I want, as also in the manner of giving up the unwanted. I cannot tolerate confusion. I know exactly what I want and I want it just so, and for that I strain every muscle and put everything I have on the ball. Remissness is not acceptable to me, negligence has no portion in me and I have never taken a defeat. I was always the victor; the first in the line; the only one chosen though many may be called. There were few things I really wanted and I always got them in their entirety, unabridged and without subtraction. I have my own way of getting what I feel should be mine, and also of giving up what is not wanted.

And I have given you up. Because I cannot tolerate competition — or a partner. I strove with none. I must be alone in the field — like a solitaire diamond — or else let it be any one but me. This is the way I have lived and this is why I have given you up. It was not easy; far from it. A little earlier, it was impossible, unthinkable. But now it is undeniably true. My giving you up is now the only reality, as my possessing you was once the only reality. Here I am, sitting still and alone in this car of ours, yours and mine, and there you are in the Nursing Home at the corner across the street, unconscious, fighting for existence on the border line of life and death. And some one else is keeping vigil by your bedside. It is all so strange, almost unbelievable — and yet completely true, even predictably true.

Perhaps the truly fictional part of it all is the eight years we lived together, madly lost in each other. At least I did, and I assum-

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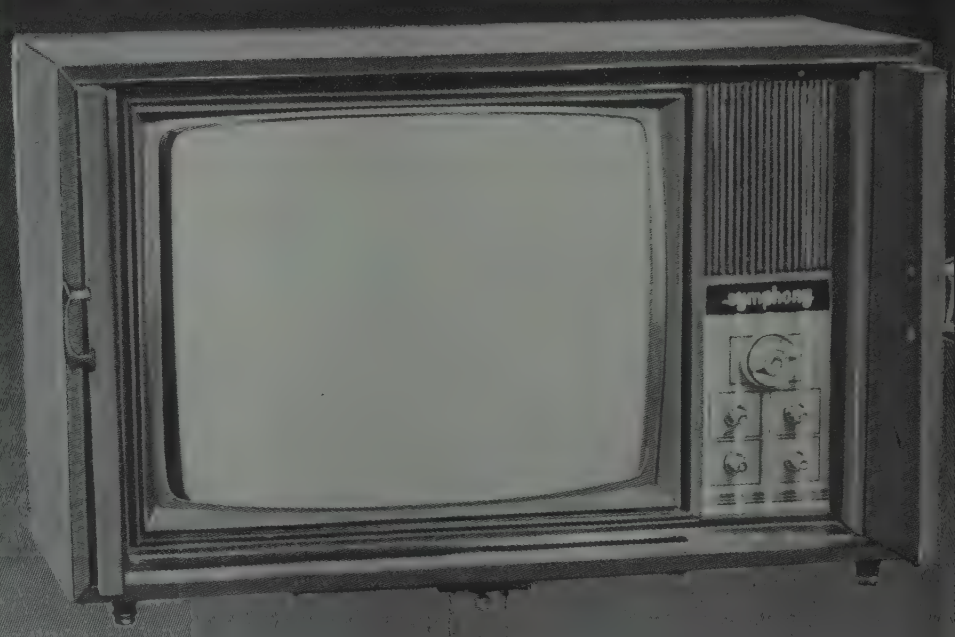

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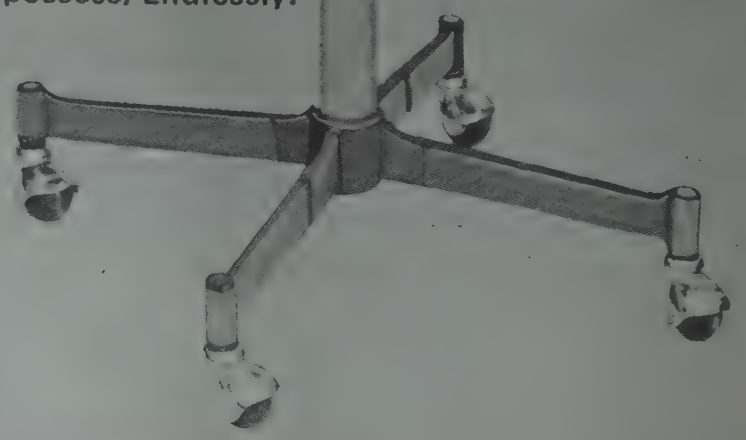


SYMPHONY TV—a possession of endless pleasure

ed that you did too. Today that certainty is not there, but you are entitled to the benefit of the doubt. I am no longer certain about you, but I at any rate lived every day and every minute of those eight long years only for you, only around you and in you. You were the measure of all things and everything else had value only in its relation to you. You were the centre of my life and its enclosing circumference too. I owned nothing, not even myself. I was all yours. But the bitter truth is that it was all one-sided. At any rate it was so for quite some time towards the end. Too late did I realise that my life was all a mirage, a fantasy.

Mind you, I do not say that you let me down. You did not betray me or even deceive me. Such an accusation would be shading the truth and it would be unjust as well. The fact is that I alone deceived myself, betrayed myself. It was a solo performance, unaided and unabetted. You were innocent when it all commenced, and you were innocent at the end too. The mistake was mine...just an error of judgment...but how devastating in the result!

Actually, I should have been telephoning you at this time from my air-conditioned sixth floor office room in the throbbing pulsating section of mid-town.

"Hullo, darling, U. is here." My ritual greeting, flicking cigarette ash into the ashtray.

"And U. is here." Your ritual response in your tinkling babyish voice which never failed to send a thrill of pleasure into the core of my being.

And then the usual jabber, but with a new taste and a new angle every day, covering a wide variety of topics, from the fat lady waddling along the street six floors below, to today's menu. Included therein would be curses for the new cook, a reference to the invigorating sunshine outside, some teasing 'recollection'... usually relating to the previous night or the night before, ending with your admonition in baby-talk to come home early to dinner.

That would be about the size of it, generally. But today dinner is off, the phone is off, the office is off. The cook was given off yesterday itself. The poor chap will turn up tomorrow and...or will he know from the newspapers? I can imagine the shocked expression on his normally dull, oily face... the maid-servant's gaping horror...steno Motwani's sudden squeal...the staff's surprise... the gossip in the club...the chauffeur's disbelief...the liftman's too.

It seems unreal to me also, and yet starkly real too. Reality must be recognised, and it should be recognised as early as possible. That saves a lot of needless trouble...and pain too.

Very well, it is recognised. Anyway the end is in sight and

prem

what little remains now will be over soon. How are you making out, darling? Still unconscious? Not feeling any agonies, I hope? Sleeping quietly? There must be no laxity in the treatment. The most eminent doctors must be summoned. There must not be even a thought about expense. Everything possible must be done. But the chances of success are very slim...U. is doomed.

Only once did I fail to raise you by phone. All the phones in the office were out of order and it was necessary to find a private phone. A public phone would not have done, for our conversation was for our private ears only. So I got out of office and wandered far afield in search of a private phone and eventually ended up at home. U. was not home. I was deeply disturbed. You had left no word with the cook when you went out. I rushed back to the office and, lo and behold, there U. was, waiting for me. Seeing me, or rather my scared and ruffled apparition, you laughed your guts out. What an upheaval for the sake of a telephone call, you said (or something like it). But love peeped out of the laughter and denied the chiding. How well I remember that incident, but that remembrance is now just a small, lazy ripple on the cool, still pool of my heart. The memory of our life together is now like some primeval protoplasm wandering alone and aimlessly in the dark green, muddy waters. And the memory is now quite painless.

Why should this be so? When a devastating earthquake is expected, why should nothing happen except the trembling of one single leaf of a tree? I think that the reason must be that **I** never caused **you** any pain at any time. Till the last I took great care to spare you pain or grief of any kind. At no time did I knowingly upstage you or let you be without the things you desired. I imposed no restrictions on your likes and dislikes, whims and fancies, nor did I at any time invade your independence. I kept you free, untrammelled and in full bloom. I was distressed even by your slightest unease, by even a passing suspicion of a tear on your eyelashes. I voluntarily circumscribed my own freedom and became your willing slave. And in order to keep this knowledge from you, lest it cause you any distress, I buried my own sorrows, my desires and my fancies in deep, deep holes inside me and planted on them the colourful flowers of your liking — passion for music and poetry, feeling for art, concern for artists, love of reading, fondness for travel and liking for your friends.

Acutally I never felt the slightest concern about anything or anyone except you. Only a faint dislike. In fact I didn't give a damn about the crazy culture circuit or for those long-haired, bums with their frustrations and their neuroses. Still, I tolerated them around me, in my house and even in our most private life, and often forced myself to like them. Only because **you** liked them. I recognised your need for scope and amplitude. I provided the air and sunlight necessary for the flowering of your personality and, in the process, maimed, mutilated and mummified my own personality lest it be in your way. Because **you** were my freedom. I can even say without bending the truth that I did none of these things for you, but only for myself. Beause when I say 'you' and 'yours' I really mean 'I' and 'mine.' My real and deepest happiness had come to consist in existing as the one and only trusted friend and lover of a free, full-blown, fulfilled 'you.'

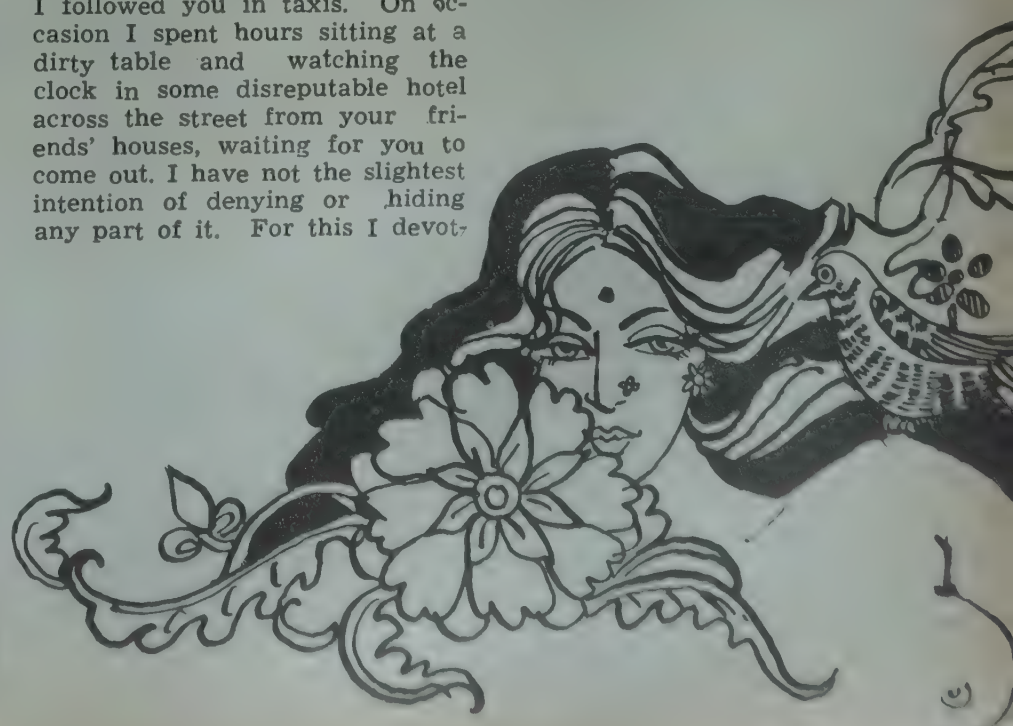
I have claimed that I gave you the fullest freedom. So I must be quite honest about all aspects of that freedom, without quibbling or prevaricating. While taking every care not to circumscribe your freedom, I made every effort to keep inviolate my own rightful place in your life, the place for which competition with another was unthinkable. In a way, therefore, I was selfish even in my boundless love for you. And here is the proof. I exercised intense and unsleeping vigilance over every little movement and action of yours. It was my passionate claim, my inalienable right, to be the first in your life, to be the first witness of everything that concerned you.

Probably you are not yet aware that I used to open secretly and read all the letters coming to you, that I got the servants to keep a tally of all the phone calls you received. I ran a check on the antecedents of each and every one of your visitors, paid secret visits to the places frequented by you. I followed you in taxis. On occasion I spent hours sitting at a dirty table and watching the clock in some disreputable hotel across the street from your friends' houses, waiting for you to come out. I have not the slightest intention of denying or hiding any part of it. For this I devoted a lot of time, money and thought, even neglected my business on occasion. There were times when, in the dead of night, I lay awake for hours, looking intently at your undraped, sleeping figure, wondering agonisingly whether any alien hand had touched it that day.

Do you remember you once packed off an old and trusted servant because you suspected him of tampering with your letters? Do you remember how many times you complained to me about receiving strange telephone calls in mysterious, disguised voices? Remember, when you surprised me, like a guilty thing, a couple of times in your favourite restaurant and you yourself suggested the explanation and satisfied yourself because you had complete and unshakable trust in me? I ensured that this trust remained unimpaired by any of my doings or activities, that you remained free and fearless. I am proud of the fact that even while defending my rightful place in your life with the utmost selfishness I kept you so free and happy that any one might have envied you.

In spite of this being so, why in the recent past did you behave as you did? There is no anger or malice or complaint behind this question. It is just a question like any other question. Why? Why should this be so? Is it that happiness itself can become cloying, imprisoning? Or is it that one can have too much of the same one person after a while, no matter how good he may be, so that my very goodness began to lose its savour and became tiresome in the end? Perhaps you would not have behaved as you did if I had been a little wicked or even depraved. Or, maybe, you would have liked me better if I had been a bit of a sadist. I don't know... though I would like to know... only out of disinterested curiosity ...Be that as it may, the fact is

Continued on page 31



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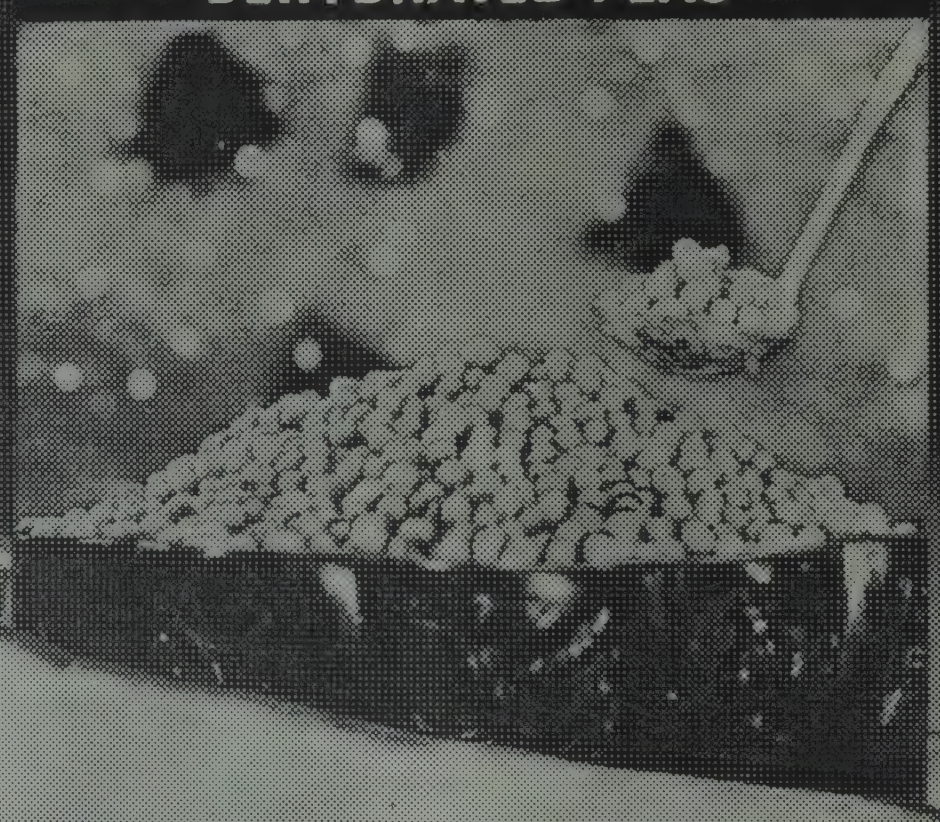

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the trauma of the first night

Gouri Salvi

In a society where there is strict segregation of the sexes, the inexperienced young bride is often confronted with a frightful traumatic experience

It never fails to puzzle us today as to why marriages in our grandmothers' (and sometimes mothers') times dragged on easily from a fortnight to a month. It appears to have been such a mad waste of time and energy. But if we try to dig a little deeper into the significance of the ceremonies and customs that took up all the time, we would realise that, indeed, there seemed to have been a method to their madness.

'Arranged marriages' were the order of the day and by their very definition, they excluded any kind of familiarity with one another on the part of the couple. Till the very day of the wedding, therefore, the man and woman were strangers to each other. This naturally gave rise to apprehensions and fears, but the family and relatives then (let us give them credit) were not oblivious to this. Hence, somewhere along the ages, marriage 'games' were created, which played an important role in the entire marriage proceedings.

These 'games' themselves may have differed from place to place in the country, but their motive was the same: to bring the man and woman closer, to get them physically used to each other, building up their physical relationship to the culmination of it all — sex. The games were therefore devised so as to be essentially tactile. For instance, a **supari** (betel nut) was hidden somewhere on the person of the bride and the bridegroom had to hunt for it. Or the bridegroom was made to hold a tiny **paan** (betel leaf) between his teeth and the shy bride was forced to bite it off from between his lips. (The **paan** was later reduced to a mere clove!) Or a large tub was filled with dark coloured water (making it opaque) and a small ring was thrown into it. The couple then had to grope around in the water, trying to retrieve the ring. Hands touched and clasped accidentally (often deliberately!). And then there was always the ritual bath, where the bride and groom were bathed together.

All these 'games' were accompanied by incessant teasing — often rather lewd teasing — so that even by its suggestiveness, sexual expectancy was heightened and the fears often allayed. If the woman was very young (about 15-16 years old), as she very often was, she was not allowed to sleep with her husband for a long period of time. The 'games' continued and the relatives and friends made it a point to leave the couple to themselves during the day time. Thus, not only did the girl get used to her husband, but in its way, it became a period of courtship, preceding the sexual relationship itself.

The scene today, however, has changed considerably. We seem to be caught mercilessly in the cross-currents of cultures. The 'permissiveness' of the West with the conservative traditions of our own country. The concept of 'love marriages' is slowly gaining ground, even in the face of opposition, yet the unshakable institution of 'arranged marriages' still exists — and, unfortunately, now without its appendage of 'games' or any other substitute, for that matter. For nobody has the time today to go in for long drawn out weddings, nor is the couple given much time to get to know one another. Matches are made cold-bloodedly on the basis of family status, the boy's salary and job and in very rare instances is there an adequate period of 'engagement.' Even if there is, most families disapprove of the couple moving around together for fear of encouraging gossip in the community. So meetings between the two are few and usually formal and, consequently, they get married as relative strangers. And this is where the fears and anxieties of sex come into play, particularly for the woman (for the fact remains that our women, having led more sheltered lives than the men, are much less knowledgeable in matters of sex).

The wedding night, therefore, for most women, becomes a frightful, traumatic experience. As, for instance, it was in the case of Maya, a graduate and working woman. Hers was one of those marriages with which we are all too familiar now. The boy came from England for a week within which time he had to get married and return to his job in the U.K. They were married, and left India immediately. He had lived abroad all his life and was sexually experienced. But surprisingly, his attitude towards sex was nothing if not callous. Her first night with him, confided Maya, amounted to nothing less than rape. The same thing was repeated for a couple of nights, until, at the very sight of her husband at night, Maya would stiffen and clench her arms and legs together, not letting him come close. In the characteristic manner of many men, not for a moment thinking that there could be something very wrong in the way he was handling the situation, her husband took her off to a doctor and told him to examine Maya (thinking probably that she was frigid). Fortunately for Maya, the doctor, an elderlly man, spotted the cause of the trouble immediately and didn't mince his words in telling the husband off, while he also explained to him the mental and emotional make-up of a woman. Things improved after that, but Maya can never forget those first few animalistic nights and somewhere her psychic has registered those shattered emotions.

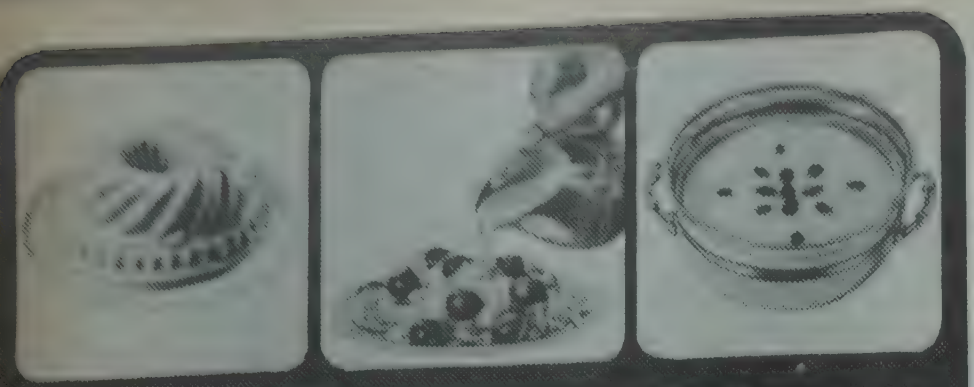
Or take the case of Lalita. An extremely lively, vivacious girl, her parents married her off, without even waiting for her consent, to a man she had never met before. Within a few days of being married, Lalita turned hysterical and was in such a bad way that she had to be given shock treatment. It was later learnt that it was due to the trauma caused by her sexual relationship with her husband. The treatment did work and she was apparently brought back to normal. Today she has two children but she still walks around in a daze and has lost all her zest for life.

Shejal was the eldest child in a large family and was married at the age of 18 to a boy of about 21. She met him three days before the marriage, and that always with the family present. In her words: "I was always a very ambitious girl and I wanted to study further, not get married so early. But there was nothing I could do about it. I did not know anything about sex. It was taboo, so never discussed and I had not read anything about sex —except once, I had read 'Lady Chatterley's Lover' on the sly, and didn't understand a thing in it! Only one instruction my mother had given me the day before I got married, and that was, 'You must allow your husband to do anything he wants to do to you. Always remember that.' Anyway, nothing happened the first night, because I was so tired, I just went off to sleep. My husband went away and came back drunk. This kept happening repeatedly. When, for the first time, he touched me physically, I was so shocked that I told him to get away from me. I just could not accept him physically and he would get drunk and then frustrated. Now when I think of it I feel we were both too young to be thrown into marriage like that, for he too had no idea about how to tackle the situation. And there was no one to advise us."

In Shejal's case, the relationship took on an extreme turn later on. Her husband's sexual frustration led to perversion and the marriage inevitably broke up. Today Shejal says, "If ever I get married again, I will be looking for a father figure this time, not a mere 'husband.' The man must understand me and treat me as someone with emotions and feelings."

Naturally, not all 'arranged' matches turn out to be disasters. Menaka was one whose 'arranged marriage' seems to have worked out beautifully. She met the boy about three months before the marriage and although there was no physical relationship as such during that period, there was no restriction on their dating. Even that, she says, helped in their getting to know each other. "Before I got married, my mother had given me some very good books on sex. Not that I didn't know what sex was all about. Anyway, the first night both of us were much too tired after all the long ceremonies. But even after that, it was a long process of getting to know each other physically and my husband was so concerned about my feelings and emotions, that I had no problems whatsoever."

But how many men will confess to being considerate of their



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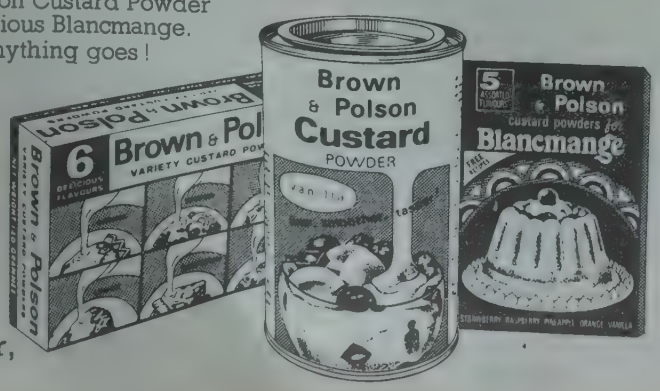

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THE TRAUMA OF THE FIRST NIGHT

wife's emotions and feelings? Not too many. Menaka falls in that category of the luckier women who have understanding husbands. Does the solution then lie in more marriages being 'love marriages?' For then obviously the man would care about the woman and her reactions, and then there need not be any fear of sex for her. But it is not as simple as that, as was made clear by two women who have had love marriages.

Sheila is a working woman, who has been married four years and has one child. Hers was a 'love marriage' and she had known her husband for nine years before they got married. Her parents were fairly liberal and did not mind her dating her boyfriend since they had decided to get married anyway. But the physical relationship between the two progressed only "as far as kissing, nothing more," she says. "It was probably due to the family upbringing of both of us. And neither of us believed in sex before marriage. In fact, we never discussed it before we got married."

When asked where she had picked up her knowledge about sex, Sheila said "It was mainly through talking with friends. Then we had sex education in schools (which was actually just a biology lesson), so I suppose my mother never thought it necesary to explain anything to me. I did not read any books on sex at all." Maybe this was why the reality of sex, when Sheila was confronted with it on her first night, was something totally different from what she had imagined. "I had very romantic notions about sex. I thought it would be all fun, all very tender, very romantic. I was just not prepared for the pain that was involved. And not just the pain but even the mess that it creates. I was really terrified by the pain and it was all so awful that I wished that night that I had not got married. I was put off by sex and the fear regarding it remained until my pregnancy. Actually, the feeling recurs even today. The enjoyment of sex is there, but some moments are difficult...."

Fairly similar was Donna's case. Also a love marriage, she had known her husband about a year before marriage. "We went as far as kissing, nothing more than that," Donna shyly confided. "Because neither of us wanted to go any further, as both of us felt that we should not have sex before marriage." And sex in reality was a contradiction to all her expectations. "I went to a convent school, and when it came to sex education, the nuns would just gloss over the subject. I never discussed it with my mother either. So what I had expected and what it really was, were totally different. It was very awkward, very painful, and I was put off. I felt I did not want sex at all. Now of course, I have no fears about it, but that was because my husband was considerate and understood my needs.

It may be significant that both Sheila's and Donna's reading habits included primarily romance books and one cannot escape the fact that the Barbara Cartlands of this world only suggest a "weakening of the knees," leaving the naive girls to form their own dreams about sex.

It is also a fact, that 'love marriage' in India does not signify much. Even today for most girls for reasons of either family upbringing or other pre-conceived notions, sex becomes a self-imposed taboo. So love and sex before marriage become mutually exclusive. One cannot go to bed with the woman one loves (till married); in doing so, the woman will be defiled and the very sanctity of marriage shattered. For good or bad, the belief stays. Added to this, are all the inhibitions surrounding the subject which makes it near impossible for most girls to discuss sex with their mothers or even their married sisters.

And so the fears regarding sex remain. Solutions for it would be extremely difficult to come by, for sex is a very personal experience, and it would be incorrect to generalise. It is made all the more difficult because, like all other things related to sex, this too is swept under the carpet, not to be discussed openly. But some broad points do emerge. That many girls are not aware of what sex is really all about. Can we blame books, schools, parents? In Sheila's words, "Mothers must make it a point to explain sex to their daughters before their marriage. And it must be done in exact terms, in a realistic manner and removing all romantic notions we tend to have."

"I don't want to get married because I'm afraid," said one young girl. "All my married cousins and friends say that men are very crude, very physical, and I would never be able to bear it..." So the most important thing does seem to be the kind of attitude the man has towards sex. But how many men are aware that to most women sex is not a mere physical experience but linked to her emotional condition?

Devi

Only yesterday filmdom was a paradise of pimps, canvassing luscious prostitutes and Hakims guaranteeing exotic Arabian nights. Secretaries and producers had to be honorary M.P.s (Maha Pimp) to a star.

Time was when a male or female film star's only hobby was sex. Sex stimulants were in demand, doctors were best friends of film stars, since abortions were not legalised. Star homes had a boom crop of babies, silent pregnant wives. Voluptuous women used to stumble out of star make-up rooms knotting their blou-

SEX: A Middle-Class Hobby

ses. Virile, muscular, unknown men used to hang around the distaff make-up rooms in the hope of being picked up.

The fifties and sixties on the screen presented soft love stories or family treats; off the screen, sex dominated filmdom.

The seventies in filmdom, in my opinion, is sexless. To be exact, it was Rajesh Khanna who changed the off-screen image of a star. He just bypassed the bevy of beauties around and made a beeline for the Press Machine instead of the Love Machine. Whilst a Shammi Kapoor preferred bed to billings, Rajesh locked himself with journalists, weaving fantasies on paper.

He preferred to spend nights with buddies or drive up to Khandala with Rahul Burman, listening to just-composed adha kaccha tapes. Rajesh was ambitious, but his ambition was not restricted to vaginal tracts.

Today filmdom, especially the stars, are too busy with films, parties, publicity for acrobatics in bed, except perhaps a man like Dharmendra. But as the guy himself had confessed to me years ago, he finds sex the easiest—rather, only—mode of communication.

As for the rest of the stars, male or female, they have found a neat way out. They have managed to pass on images of sultry, sexy gods and goddesses to the sex-starved masses. Whilst the Press Machine churns out hot stories for the fans to swoon over, the stars, tired, reach out for sleeping tablets or diet tablets. Sex has become a middle-class hobby.

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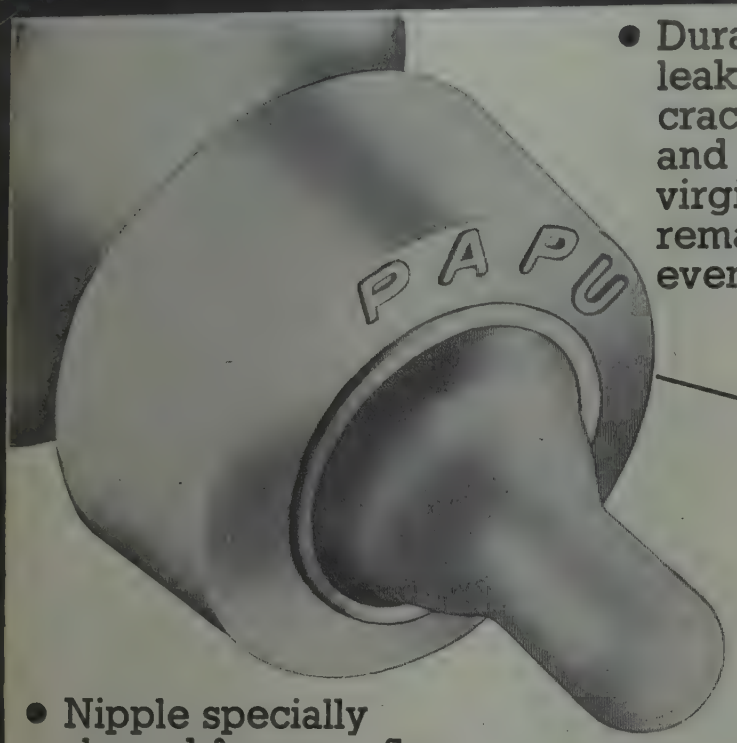

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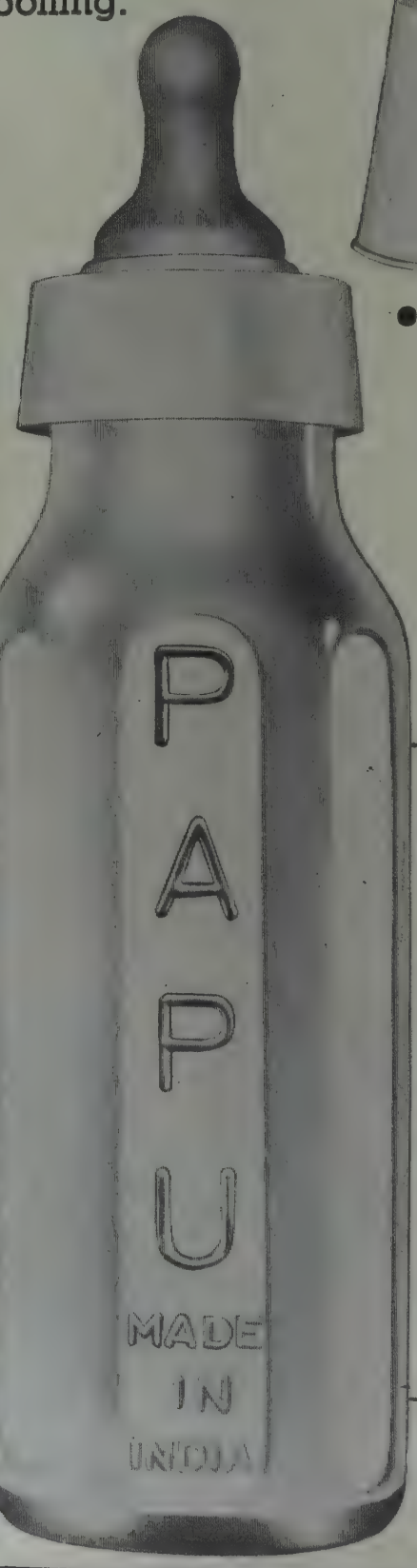

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THE JOY OF SEX

Mabel Fonseca

The language of sex, although unspoken, richly expresses a host of emotional states. It can convey deep love and the desire to achieve total closeness. It can also convey fear, hatred, an impulse to punish or control, "proof" of masculinity or feminity, or the desire to remain emotionally detached. To a sensible person, knowledge of the uses and abuses of marital sex provides a revealing commentary on his or her married life.

Many spouses twist love-making to control or wound each other. But there is a joy in sex, which comes from giving pleasure to another

Husbands and wives tend to isolate the sexual aspect of marriage because it is an area in which performance and problems are vividly specific and seemingly tangible. Yet one cannot isolate the sexual aspect of one's identity. One's attitude toward sex is part of the entire personality.

Thus a sexual problem, except when it can be traced to a purely physical difficulty, is usually a symptom of other deeper conflicts in a marriage that are being "acted out" in the explosive arena of sex.

Physical union in marriage carries a responsibility greater than in most phases of living. Many marriage partners have not learned to use sex as a way of relating and communicating and, as a consequence, often live with a sense of incompleteness and frustration. Very often there is the "intense unconscious meaning" sex has for many people. Others construct "defensive walls" around sexual attitudes. In other words, then, difficulties in the sexual area can harm an otherwise good marriage.

Attitudes Towards Sex & Love

Few cultures emphasise the fusion of sex and love. We traditionally try to contrive the biological urge of sex as completely as possible with the emotional framework of love.

Women in our culture have been given to understand that sex is a duty and primarily for procreation, hence man has always been forced to take the initiative and woman remain passive. Man, on the other hand, till now fulfilled a duty and imposed his ways and fulfilled his satisfactions, in whichever way he wanted, and it often was a one-sided satisfaction. Many times a woman has felt "I am only used as a thing," "I am his emotional wastepaper basket," "My feelings are not taken into consideration."

Marriage counsellors see various attitudes to sex relations and the relationships of the sexes in this delicate area and in the marital relationship generally. The complaint of husbands is usually that their wives take a cold and indifferent approach. As a husband said to me, "My wife comes to bed in the same saree in which she cooked the meals for the whole day and is shabby as ever. Besides, she never closes the door which divides us from other members of the family, as an excuse to put off sex, and by the time she's finished the household chores, I'm cooled down and turned off!" Another husband remarked of his wife, "She lies like a log, I might just as well make love to a cow." Still another husband said: "Her embrace is like that of a dying duck."

This cold and repelling type of attitude on the part of women has unfortunately driven many a husband to the arms of other women; outsiders have a special fascination because erotic appeal has not been staled by familiarity and contempt. This fact is established if we note that in a recent survey made in Delhi with regards to STD (Sexually Transmitted Disease), it was found that 60 per cent of the married patients were actually staying with their spouses and contracted STD through extra-marital relations

But this attitude to sex is not only taken by women, but men too. Many men see sex chiefly as a means of bolstering their self-esteem rather than as a giving and loving act. Many a wife has expressed the feeling that "he is selfish and only thinks of himself." Some wives say, "It's so hurried and quickly done with, there are no preliminaries, no after-thoughts. It's a mechanical routine."

Looking at such attitudes, sex becomes a battle from which one must emerge victorious rather than a sharing of experience.

Today's Sexual Outlook

Although early thinkers in India have produced some of the finest erotic literature on sex and its significance in the marital relationship, yet strangely our society has created many taboos and inhibitions preventing the full joy of sex.

It is encouraging to note that one aspect of to-day's sexual outlook has been the change in the concept of sex as a woman's burden or obligation, to sex as an activity that is as pleasurable to a woman as to a man. The transition from passive acceptance to active enjoyment has focussed perhaps exaggeratedly on a woman's "right" to orgasm. Although the acceptance of the fact that a woman is an active partner in sex is a happy situation, the feeling that she has to orgasm simultaneously with the man, and every time, is not called for.

Certainly the complete release of orgasm is part of a woman's sexual bill of rights. A considerate husband is aware of this. But it is neither right nor fair, in terms of either husband or wife, for female orgasm to become the **sine qua non,** the be-all and end-all of the couple's every act of married life.

The current plethora of marriage manuals that focus on sexual technique may be creating as many problems as they theorectically are solving. Husbands and wives seem to expect that reading a manual will turn them or their spouses into experts at love making. They feel "cheated" or "failures" if they do not experience all the sensations the book may promise.

But it makes no sense for a couple to uncritically adapt their love making to rules set by a manual. Sex is a matter of personal self-expression. Husbands and vives who are reasonably intelligent and self-assured can find useful suggestions in a manual for increases in their sexual satisfactions. Like any other aspect of life, sex can lead to self-discovery and growth. But discovery and growth can be thwarted if sex is always accompanied by preset conditions and programmed routines.

Joy Of Sex

Today, even in our society,

many men and women have changed their attitudes to love and sex.

A great many married women have expressed the hurt and frustration they feel because their husbands will not engage in the kind of sensual/sexual fore-play that pleases and excites them. Perhaps habits die hard and husbands take certain patterns of stimulation for granted, without communications on individual choice and need. Women today are seeking not only to please but to be pleased. These husbands take their wives for granted and will not open themselves up to the joy that comes from giving please to another.

The emphasis on the female orgasm leads many wives who do not achieve orgasm regularly to feel they are somehow lacking in feminity, or that their husbands are failing them. Complicating the tensions this pattern sets up is the fact that many husbands are similarly conditioned to believe that a woman must always have an orgasm for sex to be successful, and thus they feel unmanly if they cannot bring their wives to total release. Even when a wife tells her husband in all sincerity that it doesn't matter, that she gets pleasure from their intimacy, quiet satisfaction from pleasing him, he is yet likely to feel inadequate.

Female orgasm is, in fact, a highly variable matter. Many sexually healthy women do not achieve it in every sexual act. Their satisfaction derives in part from the other physical sensations of love-making, in part from giving their husbands pleasure, and in part from the sense of closeness that accompanies sexual intimacy.

Again today's frank approach to marital sex includes recognition of a wide range of sexual techniques. But many husbands and wives are still reluctant to experiment with them for fear they are not normal. However, normal sex between spouses is anything that best meets the physical and emotional needs of the two persons concerned.

Here one may particularly mention the attitude to oral sex. Many sex manuals have influenced young husbands of today to indulge in oral sex in fore-play, but many women have not been prepared to easily accept this form of stimulation. This is perhaps because husband-wife hardly communicate on these matters.

At the same time, there are many women who are too passive to make love to their men. Their idea of being female is the stereotyped one of submission, leaving the responsibility to the man. But, on the contrary, only when she accepts full responsibility for her own pleasure will she get what she really wants and needs. If sex is meaningful to you, then you are ready to grow and make the sexual journey.

Women will realize their full potential only when they free themselves from the trappings of the double standard, the inhibiting "nice girl" image and cultural hand-me-downs.

Unfortunately, a great many men have swallowed the stereotyped notion of themselves as worldly, infallible lovers. Frequently, when the woman finally overcomes her reluctance to tell a man what she likes, or doesn't like, he won't listen. "Nobody's going to tell me how to make love," he thinks, feeling his masculinity impugned. Obviously, if he's supposed to know it all, then nobody can tell him anything.

Today the emphasis is on sensuousness and touch and their focus is to combine sensuality, sexuality and love. There are a few clues to get closer to the enjoyment of sex.

The starting point of all love-making is close bodily contact. Love has been defined as the harmony of two souls and the contact of two epidermes. That includes our whole skin surface, our feelings of identity, aggression and so on, and all of our fantasy needs. Luckily, sex behaviour in humans is enormously elastic and also nicely geared to help us express most of our needs. Elaboration in sex is something we need rather specially.

Granted this feed-back and mutual exploration, there are two modes of sex, the duet and the solo — and a good concert alternates between them. The duet is a cooperative effort aiming at simultaneous orgasm, or at least one orgasm each and complete, untechnically planned let-go. (For further details see "Joy of Sex" (ed) by Alex Comfort.)

Top level enjoyment doesn't have to be varied, it just often is. In fact, being stuck rigidly with one sex technique usually means anxiety.

Practice Makes Pleasure. One does not hasten to the langurous arms of pleasure without preparation. To be able to receive as well as give is integral to pleasure. To be a good receiver of pleasure means that you are able to accept it from yourself — to be good to yourself. Discover, therefore, the Primal You, your sensuous nature.

The loving Massage. An exploration with Eros. Sensualists emphasise the massage as the message. It is an incredibily beautiful way of communicating to someone, from deep within, "I care — I love."

Seeing I to I: Explorations in Sex Communication. Talking about sex is relatively easy. But communicating about aspects of love-making that leave room for improvement is more difficult. We need to make the effort of learning through communication aids. (See Paula Newhorn, "Your Guide to Love and Sex.")

Pleasure blocks. To be aware of having sexual desires and feelings is one thing. To genuinely accept these feelings is quite another. Only then can you realize your full sensual potential. And this frequently involves breaking over parents' sensual/sexual taboos — without feeling guilty.

Sexercises. Sexercises are designed to directly benefit key areas of your body in terms of sexual functioning. However the better the muscle tone and flexibility throughout your mind and body, the more you benefit sensually.

A genuine sexual revolution, must begin with sensual awareness—a sensual revolution! When the sensual and sexual are revalued and reintegrated, when the pernicious double standard is laid to rest, then it is possible to achieve freedom and natural potential.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Pritam Phatnani, former Asst. Police Surgeon, lecturer in Forensic Medicine at the Grant Medical College and now Head of the Medical Education Department, Glaxo Laboratories (India) Ltd., Bombay, rendered invaluable help in the researching of the various articles in this issue relating to sex crimes.

Well-known artists B. Prabha and her husband Vithal kindly lent their sketches to illustrate several articles.

prem

Continued from page 23

that something went sour. Something went very wrong and something very bad resulted.

Not that I objected to your kissing a nice-looking fellow or writing a love letter to some one who was "frustrated"...All this I could take in my stride. I used to get to know about these junkets without your being aware of it, but I had no serious objection to them. I could understand, and could have continued to understand, your need for happiness upto that point. Even after the first flush of youth had passed you were still extremely youthful in spirit. Your physical and mental appetites were robust and your awareness of your own beauty and attraction was undiminished. You were a passionate devotee of art, and fascination for artists was an urgency in your blood. I could understand that...I really could.

But then you went too far, I became aware of competition, alternatives, surrogation. The message reached deep inside me, and the detective in me girded his loins.

You know what, darling? I lived your 'affair' perhaps more intensely than you yourself did. I lived it with all that I am, working or resting, away from you and in your arms, I lived your affair. I had no other existence. I hungered avidly for every new detail and, having got it, went through the torments of the damned. The detail, the torment, raged and rampaged in my blood and brain and suffused my awareness. I became a glutton for punishment. And all this without giving you an inkling; without invading or permitting invasion of your freedom, your personality, your yearnings. That was of the utmost importance, of the essence. I did not want you to be unhappy, diminished, deceived. I wanted you to remain perfectly happy ... free. I wanted to keep it that way and to bear my grief; if possible to end my grief, for it was far bigger than I expected. And that is just what I did.

At this moment there is a jeep — a Police jeep — and three cars standing in the parking lot of the Nursing Home. Inside its thick walls I can feel the heavy monumental silence executing swift, trained movements. The atmosphere outside your room is tense. The shining, white glazed tiles of the walls and the equally white ceiling have sensed the creeping approach of the inauspicious, and stand paralysed in the expectation of the imminent, inevitable end. There is deep silence in your room; so deep that your agonised, halting breathing can be heard. You are now on oxygen; and rubber pipes of the cylinder are attached to your nostrils. Saline is being injected into your veins. Men and women in white are standing by your bed-side like statues.

And you know darling, there he is. He, the one who has usurped my place. The frustrated artist. He has gone to pieces and is stretched out in a chair in utter collapse. I think the shadow of death is more clearly visible on him that on you. Poor fellow, he is dying a thousand deaths... Or would it be more correct to say 'living a thousand deaths?' My burden is today on his head. The anxiety, the perturbation, the agony, that should be mine is transfered to him. The love that was mine for so many years is now his. And he finds it too heavy, too insupportable, a burden to sustain.

You might remember this, too. Once our car was involved in an accident while you were driving. Your face was saved and the injuries were minor. But there was deep shock and you were unconscious for full thirtysix hours. The doctors feared that there may be some internal injury to the brain. Then I too lived a thousand deaths — but not so supinely as our frustrated artist — oh, no! I raised hell and high water. I brought the most expensive physicians; dismissed them as nitwits and brought others. The nurses trembled when I spoke. I simply rained money that day. For thirtysix hours I erected a veritable defensive fortress around you with my body, mind and money. While you fought in your unconsciousness to keep death at bay, I fought consciously but equally hard even with the slightest semblance of death. I would not break or be paralysed into helpless inaction. Not for a second, no! And when you opened your eyes...oh, God! What a moment it was! What a glorious, glorious moment! I was re-born that instant...I don't like him. He isn't worth it, I'm sure, darling. He isn't worthy of your little finger...However. What does it matter now?

I can hear the uneasy rustle of the khaki uniforms of the Police officers. They want your statement, but they will not get it. You will not regain consciousness. One more gruesome game of Destiny is nearing its macabre end.

And I am the neutral, unconcerned spectator of it all...as if I have no part whatever in it. My heart is so strangely cold. There is no feeling of any kind, as if everything has been buried in a grave and sealed. There is no movement within me...everything is so still, as if my being is intently listening to its own silence — the silence of the grave without the repose of the dead. And this in the rush hour...The time now is a quarter past twelve...nineteen seconds — twenty — twenty-one — two — three — four.

I had to separate you from myself, exorcise your spell. Because, as I said earlier, I could not tolerate competition for my rightful place. It was intolerable that I should become just an appendage, a slightly irrelevant periphery to your life — I, the one who was always the victor, the first in the line, the one who was chosen though many may be called. It was unthinkable that I should be the other one...the one who was unwanted or tolerated only because he was there...just a friend of the groom...Perish the thought! It's just not on. But to separate you from me! That would be like chopping off a hunk of living flesh from the body.

A wave of powerlessness, of utter helplessness, overwhelmed me. How to obliterate from the fortyeight or so years of my life the last eight years of full, fulfilled, divinely happy life, of total existence in a totally shared world? I felt I just couldn't make it, just couldn't. And then the long-buried 'I' inside me woke up like Lazarus risen from the dead. Powerlessness, helplessness, oozed out of me as if miraculously exorcised by some super-human power. In one electrifying moment my mind made a quantum jump across the unyielding threshold. I saw clearly the thing that had to be done. It was all so simple, so near that I could touch it if I stretched out my hand. I thought it out again in slow motion. Yes, that alone could end it all...only that could. That alone

was the solution, the final solution. The way out...the finale...

I looked at the watch. A quarter to three and some seconds. You were lying beside me with your back turned. Your breathing was deep and unhurried. Your left ear peeped through the slightly dishevelled jet black hair like a dewy, pearl-like bud flowering in the lateness of the night. The satiny down on your cheek was visible in the dim light of the bed lamp. The rhythmic movements of your breast could be felt even from the back. One arm cradled your cheek and the other rested loosely on your side. It was so shapely and graceful, like some rich, silk apparel mounted for display. I moved the tip of my finger softly down the arm and, oh! it was so thrilling. As if I was doing that for the very first time in my life. I breathed softly on the nape of your neck and a soft, pink susurration spread slowly along the white skin... 'smooth as monumental alabaster', like Desdemona's! My God! That was what the frustrated bugger must have been getting every day...All this was his privilege! His! I got up.

I think I put out the light — the bed lamp — in the morning. I put on my street clothes and shoes; looked in the mirror and adjusted the knot of my tie; and sprinkled a few cool drops of eau-de-cologne on my face. It was so refreshing. I came out of the flat and found myself carrying the bunch of keys as usual. Then it struck me that there was no point in taking them with me. Actually there was no point in putting them back either, but I went back into the flat all the same and replaced them in the usual place. I couldn't resist the temptation to take one more look at you — just couldn't. And then it struck me that the bed lamp was still on. I put it out. With that action I felt that a long, long millenium had come to an end. I had ended it myself. I went out of the flat again and it was then nearing seven-fifty. By my watch, of course. Going down the lift, I said to myself: "Rather early today, eh!"

The doctors who had been called in have now come down and the Police Inspector is with them. The doctors are taking leave of each other. How hard-hearted can you get! Some one loses, in consciousness or in unconsciousness, an epic life-and-death struggle, and these gentlemen are able to think of the formalities of leave-taking. Strange. . . So very strange. The doctors are in their respective cars; the cars have sprung into life and are swiftly going their separate ways. The parking lot is empty, except for the Police jeep. The sparrows on your window shutter have cradled their beaks in their breasts and are now silent.

Darling, good-bye. Sleep in peace. This too is my gift to you. For eight years I gave you a free, ample, prismatic life. You will wake up in death as you have always woken up in the morning after a night's refreshing sleep. I can see right now the expression of innocent surprise on your sweet face when you wake up. I have given you the surprise of your life-time — and my life-time too.

There was no other possible way of getting separated from you, of obtaining release from your thraldom.

I am consoled by the thought that I could accomplish this too without causing you any pain.

BARE BODIES

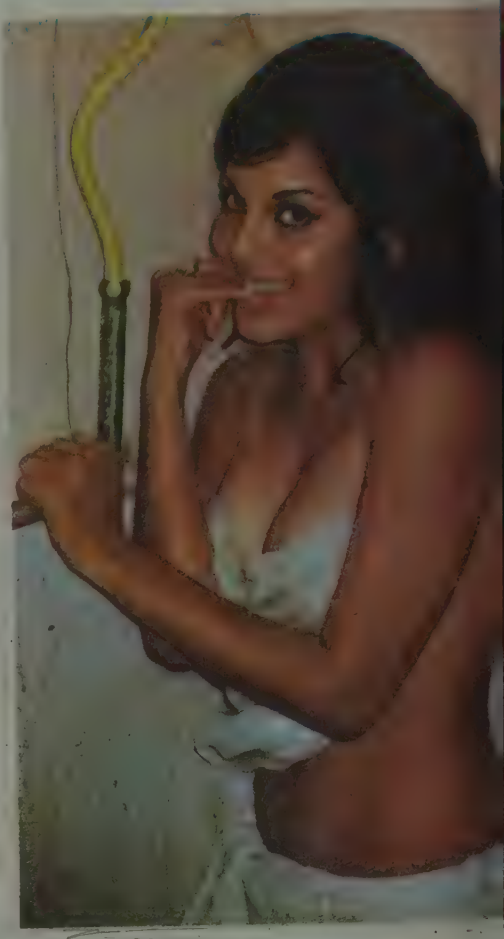
WHERE IS THE

Sanjit Narweka

With the increasingly liberal life-styles of th modern age, the Cinema has also become mor permissive. Themes hitherto restricted to blu films have made their way into legitimate cinema

LEFT: Jean Paul Belmondo with a starlet in "The Body Of My Enemy".

BELOW: Sophia Aman in S. Krishnaswamy's feature-length documentary, "From Indus Valley To Indira Gandhi".



Arpana Chowdhury in the notorious bathing scene from B. R. Ishara's "Zaroorat"

Photograph: Chandan Ghosh

A story that is currently making the rounds in the United States concerns Al Goldstein, the militant publisher of the pornographic magazine, **Screw**. It would seem that Al walked out of a preview of the film "Salo", pale and shaken, muttering, "Jesus. That was too, f... much for me. Where do we go from here?"

What gives the story added significance is its central figure, Al, hardly a man of fastidious tastes as is evident from his magazine **Screw**, and the fact that "Salo" is not another run-of-the-mill pornographic film but the last work of the erratic Italian genius, poet and film maker, Pier Paolo Pasolini. The film is the story of 18 teenage boys and girls imprisoned in a castle by two old ladies for whose viewing pleasure they are made to submit to acts of sexual perversion. The film maker himself died in an accident (murder?) after a homosexual pick-up.

Both the film and the film maker are excellent indicators of the times we live in, and one cannot really blame Al for asking the question he did. But the question which is surely of greater importance is: "How did we get here in the first place?"

Though sex and violence, as we know it today, is a fairly recent innovation, one can find elements of both in films as early as 1893. In fact, one of Edison's first Kinetoscope subjects was "The Execution of Mary, Queen Of Scots" (1893). This one-minute film began with Mary approaching the chopping block, kneeling before the executioner and then the gruesome sight of her head rolling in the dust.

A couple of years later, sometime in 1896, peep-show films made their appearance. Although there was no explicit sexual content, audiences could see women clad in undergarments walking about, undressing or doing exercises ("Her Morning Exercise", "The Pajama Girl"). But, by and large, films were either based on working class themes like "Man's Lust For Gold", "Root Of Evil" or on literary classics like "Vanity Fair" or were slapstick comedies like those of Mack Sennett and Charlie Chaplin.

However, in the post World War I period there was a general relaxation of moral attitudes and this change was quickly reflected in the films of that era. Sophisticated sex, seduction, divorce, drinking and the use of drugs became the symbols of fashionable life and hence were played up in film after film. Cecil De Mille, then a fledgeling producer-director with both eyes on the box-office churned out a series of sex comedies: "Male And Female" (1919), "Don't Change Your Husband" (1919), "Why Change Your Wife?" (1920) with a surfeit of bathtub scenes. Cecil's less successful brother, William, describes his brother's films in **Hollywood Saga** thus: "Bathing became a lovely ceremony rather than a mere sanitary duty. Undressing was not just the taking off of clothes but a progressive revelation of entrancing beauty; a study in diminishing draperies"

True to human nature, Hollywood began to believe in its own fantasies and its inhabitants adopted a similar life-style, in the bargain becoming a centre of 'sin'

AND BLOOD

CINEMA HEADING?

Under the guise of 'realism', film makers have shifted their cameras from the drawing room to the bedroom and now...even to the bathroom. Where will it all end?

Robert de Niro in a violent scene from Martin Scorsese's "Taxi Driver".

ABOVE: Sanjay Khan and Zeenat Aman kiss on-camera for the former's "Abdullah".

Photograph: Sanil

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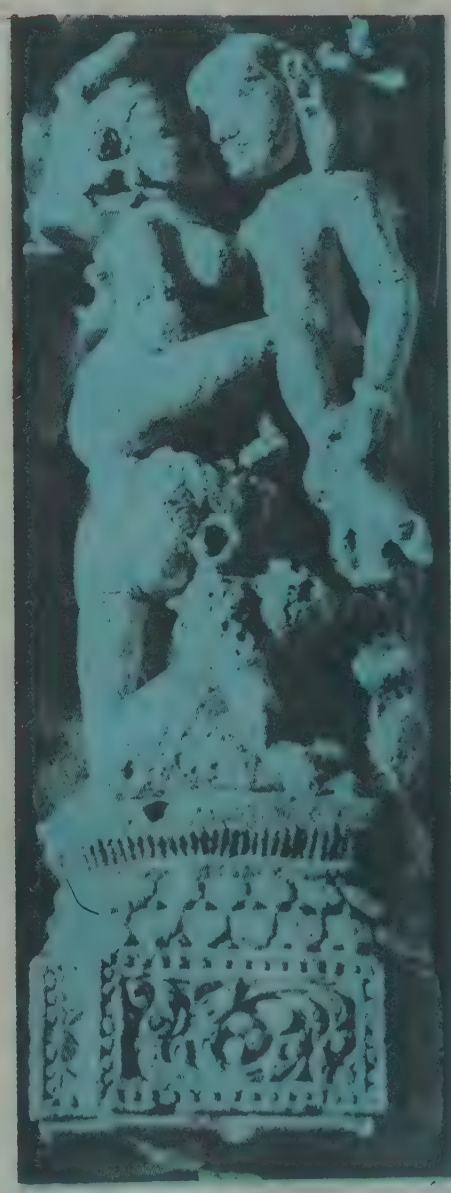
and scandal. This led to a public hue and cry about the increasing crime and deteriorating standards of morality in Hollywood. In an effort to avert public criticism and Federal government censorship, producers banded together to form the Motion Picture Producers of America and appointed as its head the then Postmaster General, Will H. Hays. The new 'morality' introduced by the Hays Office was based on the quaint theory that evil must always be punished and virtue rewarded.

Most producers turned to more sober subjects while the more enterprising ones like Cecil De Mille projected sex behind a bibilical facede ("The Ten Commandments").

There were other producers who detested this hypocritical depiction of sex, among them the masters of understatement, Charlie Chaplin and Ernst Lubitsch. Chaplin preferred "the tickling innuendo of sex" as in "A Woman Of Paris" while Lubitsch would imply all sorts of intimate relationships by a mere exchange of glances. The 'Lubitsch touch', as it came to be known, surfaced in films like: "Forbidden Paradise' (1924), "Kiss Me Again" (1925).

The Great Depression of the 30's hit the movie world too. In the face of national disaster, films of the Lubitsch-De Mille kind began to lose audiences. The public began to demand 'realism' and a reflection of the contemporary scene. Studios, ever alert to changes in public attitudes, churned out a staggering amount of gangster films: "The Big House" (1930), "Little Caeser" (1930), "The Front Page" (1931), "The Public Enemy" (1931), "The Secret Six" (1931), "I Am A Fugitive From A Chain Gang" (1932),

The climax of violence. . . from the Hungarian film, "The Strange Rule"



In the name of art. . . Gopi Krishna and willing friend reproduce a Konarak temple fresco for "Har Har Mahadev."

Photograph: Baldev

"Scarface" (1932). Sadistic sexuality and brutal violence became the speciality of great movie idols like James Cagney, Edward G. Robinson, Paul Muni and Cary Grant.

This was also the era of a no-nonsense approach to sex which can be best summarised by Mae West's classic line from "I'm No Angel": "When I am good, I am very, very good, but when I am bad, I am better". But Mae West's good-humoured vulgarity and her self-mocking, frank sexuality in films like "She Done Him Wrong" (1933), "Going To Town" (1934) and "Belle Of The Nineties" (1934) proved to be too strong and, under the new Production Code, her scripts were bowdlerised. To escape a similar fate, stars of gangster films began to diversify their roles. By the early 40's Mae West was reduced to making pale copies of her earlier films and Hollywood got down to the serious business of making patriotic films. With war looming on the horizon the hedonistic pursuits of sex and violence were temporarily suspended.

In the post World War II period, the violence and sensationalism of the 30's' gangster film was replaced by the psychopathic violence reminiscent of the tortures of concentration camps: "The Dark Corner" (1946), "The Big Sleep" (1946). Added to this was the new interest in mental torture, again thanks to the Nazi atrocities during the war: "The Brighton Strangler" (1945), "The Strange Affair Of Uncle Harry" (1945), "Lost Weekend" (1945), "Kiss Of Death" (1947).

The 50's was the decade of the pin-up girl — Marilyn Monroe, Jane Russell and Brigette Bardot. Earlier in 1943, Jane Russell had become a star in Howard 'Hughes' "The Outlaw". It was generally let out that the brassiere worn by Miss Russell in this film ,designed by producer-director Howard Hughes, was built on the principles of aerodynamics — a crack, no doubt, on Jane Russell's generous physical attributes and Hughes' interest in aviation. Jane survived this publicity and went on to make films like "Double Dynamite" (1950), "His Kind Of Woman" (1951), "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" (1953).

Almost simultaneously Marilyn Monroe was making films like "All About Eve" (1950), "Love Nest" (1951), "We're Not Married" (1952), "Don't Bother To Knock" (1952), "The Seven Year Itch" (1955) and "Some Like It Hot" (1959). By 1957, Roger Vadim had made a star out of Brigette Bardot with "And God Created Woman".

Though the spy film continued to remain popular from the post War I period, the right combination of sex, suspense and mild sadism was found only in 1962 with "Dr. No". Sean Connery was turned into some kind of a walking, brawling, phallic symbol. Cheaper imitations like the 'Uncle' and 'I Spy' series followed with larger doses of sex and fisticuffs. But the violence (if it can be called that) had a mechanical, choreographic quality. No one took it seriously, least of all the censors. This attitude towards screen violence is reflected in the famous New York censor decision on a film: "In the scene in which the girl is tortured while hanging by her hands, eliminate all views of her with breasts exposed."

By the late 60's and early 70's however, the censors could not take the same attitude towards violence, with films like "Bullit", "Dirty Harry", "The French Connection" and "The Godfather" being made. Also, to infuse more realism in 'Westerns', directors like Sam Peckinpah and Arthur Penn started making them more gory. The climax of Arthur Penn's "Bonnie And Clyde" (1968) with its all-out shooting and maimed bodies is like an orgasm. Sam Peckinpah celebrated violence in films like "The Wild Bunch" and "Bring Me The Head Of Alfredo Garcia". What worried the censors was not the celebration of killing but the propagation of the idea of how easy it is to kill. Peckinpah justifies the violence in his films with: "You cannot escape it anywhere". A better defense comes from the American film critic, Mark Crispin Miller: ". . . this need not prove that Peckinpah wants a lot of people to jump up and down in bloodthirsty glee. He merely wants to worry his audience."

Apart from filmmakers who look upon violence as catharsis or a means of social comment, there are film makers who justify it on the grounds of entertainment. Says Fred Weintraub, producer of "Enter The Dragon", the chief initiator of the Kung-fu films: "It's a violent world. We don't pretend to be trying to reform people through films and we don't believe that film violence contributes to real violence. In any case it's entertainment, and that is what we are giving people."

With increasing violence, films also began to incorporate explicit sexuality. What was generally confined to exploitation (blue) films entered the mainstream of commercial cinema, though full frontal nudity is still rare. Whenever it appears ("Five Easy Pieces", "The Last Picture Show" "Last Tango In Paris"), it is generally restricted to the female on the theory that "as regards primary sex organs there is less to see". Amos Vogel, the American film critic, says that the penis is the most threatening visual known to the censors. Hence its extreme magnification and stylisation in Stanley Kubrick's "A Clockwork Orange" led to a censorship crisis in many countries.

As usual, the full acceptance of the nude human body was undoubtedly the achievement of the avant garde and art cinema. In such films, nudity and explicit sex were not incidental but integral to the theme of the film which generally explored the role of sex in the lives of people. The films attempted to "desentimentalise man and re-integrate this over-civilised being with nature by returning him to more primitive and less alienated societies."

The famed Swedish director Ingmar Bergman, explored man-woman and woman-woman relationships in such films as "The Silence", "Persona" and "The Touch". Federico Fellini, a leading Italian director, made use of explicit sex to unmask the immorality of the privileged classes in contemporary Italy. In films like "La Dolce Vita", "8½" and "Satyricon" Fellini often uses perverted sex, homosexuals and transvestites to convey or emphasise his point.

Rape sequences reached the heights of sado-masochism with films like Peckinpah's "Straw Dogs" and Peter Collinson's "Fright". Earlier rape scenes, as in "A Streetcar Named Desire" and "Peyton Place", had been mere suggestions or explicit implications. Rape had also been given a humorous slant in films like "Lock Up Your Daughters' and "Waterhole Three" (where James Coburn describes it as "an assault with a friendly weapon"). Its depiction became a little brutal with films like "The Nightcomers", but with "A Clockwork Orange" it has reached nightmarish proportions.

With the increasing world-wide permissiveness, it would have been surprising if India had escaped the effects. Since Independence, there has been a growing awareness of international trends in film making.

Traditionally, attitudes towards cinematic sex and violence have been largely moulded by changes in censorship, rather the changing interpretation of the unchanging censorship rules. Sex existed in the Indian commercial cinema even before the 70's but it was essentially through sly innuendoes in dialogue. Even in the 70's this trend continued with films like "Garam Masala" where Mehmood hands over his pet parrot to a sidekick with the words: "Pakad mera. . . tota."

Visually sex was restricted to bare legs and emphasised bustlines. Raj Kapoor had made an art out of getting the heroine wet by having her fall into a lake or sing and dance in the rain. The only difference was that Raj Kapoor's films were never vulgar. Erotic maybe. Raj Kapoor's guru, Kedar Sharma, had also made an artistic activity out of sex by emphasising the female form in films like "Chitralekha" (which even had a semi-nude Mehtab bathing in an ancient bathtub). Violence, too, was limited to fist exchanges between the hero and villain in the last reel.

Things changed with the advent of the new kind of cinema that lapped onto Indian shores in the early 70's. Mature themes like "Dastak", "Anubhav" and "Avishkar" were tackled with a few tantalising scenes thrown in for added effect. Prem Kapoor made "Badnaam Basti" on the forbid-

Is this what permissiveness will lead to in India? Kiran Kumar and a willing starlet in a deleted scene from "Raja Kaka".

den subject of homosexuality and Shivendra Sinha's heroine in "Phir Bhi" was a girl with a severe Electra complex.

Then came B. R. Ishara whose films, though terribly crude in execution, were the first honest attempts at portraying sex in Indian society. With films like "Chetna", "Zaroorat" "Society", "Nayi Duniya Naye Log". Ishara introduced an era of bold visuals and bolder dialogue.

Ishara also has his imitators in film makers like Rajdeep ("Basti Aur Bazaar"), D. S. Sultania ("Parivartan"), Vijay Kapoor ("Call Girl") and Abrar ("Aurat Khadi Bazaar Mein"). Film Institute graduate Firoze Chinoy made the notorious "Do Raha" which seemed to be constructed around its marathon rape scene. Theatre director and playwright Satyadev Dubey scripted and wrote the dialogues of "Prabhat" in Ishara's hard-hitting style.

On the commerical side, the ever-enterprising Indian producer had discovered an 'educational' formula to introduce sex: the sex education film. The pioneer in this field was B. K. Adarsh, a long-time producer of mythologicals and stunt melodramas. His film "Gupt Gyan" was followed by "Kaam Shastra", "Gupt Shastra", "Stree Purush" and a whole lot of regional language films. Now, producers are on to a new jackpot: the primitive man. The success of "Adi Manav" (unabashedly copied from "Creatures The World Forgot") have prompted a series of films like "Adi Yug" and "Purana Purush".

Violence as a serious box-office proposition was introduced by films like "Deewaar" and "Sholay'. The latter film based on innumerable American and Italian Westerns, is a long exercise in sadism and perverted minds and incorporates a mad dacoit, massacres, and mass looting. As a direct result of this, the mild fist fights between the hero and villain became more vicious and included other lethal weapons. In spite of all this, most fight sequences in Indian films look what they are: carefully composed ballets.

Off-beat film makers have tried to justify the use of violence as a catharsis. Well-known scriptwriter Vijay Tendulkar, who has used violence as a basic theme in most of the films he has written, says; "How can violence be destructive when it is the manifestation of an individual's life force and dynamism? Violence is justified when it is inevitable violence, violence against injustice or violence for survival". Shyam Benegal's "Nishant" and Girish Karnad's "Kaadu" are two examples of films which deal with rural violence aesthetically.

With the reconstitution of the Censor Board and the reframing of the Censorship regulations in early 1978, it remains to be seen if explicit sex and violence will be allowed in Indian films. Already a Kannada film "Kanakambara" has been passed in spite of a kissing scene, though there were precedents for that ("Johar And Mehmood In Goa" and "Bombay Talkie"). Raj Kapoor's latest film "Satyam Shivam Sundaram" which was made into some sort of a test case, has been passed with an Adult certificate, though without a single cut. One does not know if this is an indicator of future censorship policy or merely a freak case.

Over the years, the depiction of normal heterosexual practices on the screen nave been accepted, but even the most liberal minded feel that the portrayal of sexual deviations is beyond the pale of pictorial representation.

Meaningless violence and bloodshed. . . a still from "Black Gunn" a film which was banned in India.

The progress towards kinkier and more unnatural sex can be seen by comparing two films released within four years of each other. "I'm Curious Yellow" (1969) and "Last Tango In Paris" (1972) Although, "Last Tango In Paris" is not visually bolder than "I'm Curious Yellow", the sex depicted in the film is kinkier, less playful, less innocent. Even more bizarre are films like "A Clockwork Orange" "The Devils" "Realm Of The Senses" and "Salo". In the commercial cinema, homosexuality and lesbianism have been accepted with films like "A View From The Bridge", "The Leather Boys", "Staircase", "Midnight Cowboy' (all on homosexual behaviour) and "Therese And Isabelle", "Baby Love", "The Fox" and "The Children's Hour".

However, 'serious' homosexual cinema is limited to the underground in America. Kenneth Anger, Stan Brakhage, Andy Warhol and Paul Morrissey are pioneers in this field. They are the first film makers to treat the subject with seriousness and indicate the possibility of tenderness between two males. Films like Brakhage's "Fireworks" (1947) have become classics by now. Though most lesbian films are made by men with the male market in mind, there is one woman, Constance Beeson ("Unfolding", "Holding") who makes lesbian films from the woman's point of view:

Another prominent film maker who has dealt with both homosexual and lesbian themes is one of the propagandists of the German New Wave, the 'Die Neue Welle' — Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Himself a homosexual, Fassbinder uses full frontal nudity (especially male) in films like "The Fox" and "The Bitter Tears Of Petra von Kant" which have been acclaimed at major Film Festivals. However, Fassbinder is not overtly concerned with homosexual behaviour. It is the power struggle in a relationship that interests him. Another interesting German film is Rosa von Praunheim's pro-Gay "It Is Not The Homosexual Who Is Perverse But The Situation In Which He Lives" (1971). The film is a "freak show of German homosexuals shot in cinema verite style".

Other sexual variations are rare. Oral sex has appeared in films like Warhol's "Blow Job" and the Polish film maker, Jerzy Skolimowski's "The Departure" In both films the actual act is not shown; only an increasing ecstasy is depicted on the face. Bestiality came to commercial films via Woody Allen's "Everything You Wanted To Know About Sex But Were Afraid To Ask" (1972). In this film he shows a sexual relationship (albeit in a humorous vein) between a man and a sheep, which is seductively dressed in stockings and garters. Necrophilia (intercourse with the dead) is totally absent except for some hints in low grade horror films.

From the beginning of this decade film makers have increasingly begun to make use of children in simulated sexual acts with their elders. Louis Malle's 1971 film "Murmur Of The Heart" is a comedy of a sophisticated, wayward family where the mother sleeps with her teenage son. And in his most recent film "Pretty Baby", he tells the story of a 12-year-old nymphet hooker played by Brooke Shields. In 1972, Japanese film maker Shuji Terayama shocked the cinematic world with "Emperor Tomato Ketchup" in which he used children in explicit, perverted sexual deviations with adults. But then, Japanese Cinema always had an inclination towards the kinky and the perverted. Films like Koji Wakamatsu's "Violated Angels", Donald Richie's "Cybele" and Nagisa Oshima's "Empire Of Sin" (alternately titled "In The Realm Of The Senses") deal exclusively with sado-masochistic sex followed by the castration of the male organs by the female.

Probably the most scandalous of film makers functioning today is the Austrian avant gardist, Otto Muehl. He achieved notoreity with films like "Mama And Papa" and "Sodoma" which are based on his 'Materialaktion': "live happenings involving nude protagonists in real and extravagant sexual violence and defilement." The action in "Sodoma" includes every known sexual activity: intercourse, fellatio, masturbation bondage, insertion of various fluids in the vagina, even urination. . . Muehl even goes beyond hard core films by showing coprophilia (eating of human excreta).

Muehl says that "it is a complete demystification of sex and its portrayal as a purely bodily act." Muehl insists that he seeks to destroy the 'system' that sanctifies violence but denies the body its basic functions.

Amos Vogel, the American film critic comments in his book, **The Film As A Subversive Art:** "It is a mistake to list Muehl's work as pornographic thus underestimating its seditious, anarchist intent. The only way to explain Muehl and his films is as the product of a continent that has experienced two World Wars in the short space of half a century. There is the crushing trauma of Nazism, the stench of concentration camps, collective guilt, unbridled aggression. . . in Muehl's work."

Even more surprising than this near-defence, is the fact that Muehl has followers in other countries that too went through the Nazi trauma. Guenta Brus and Otmar Bauer from Germany have made a film "Impudence In Grunewald" which follows the style of their master closely.

Yes. Al Goldstein may very well ask: "Where do we go from here?"

MOD FASHIO

DO THEY PROVOKE MEN TO VIOLENCE?

Shailaja Ganguly

Young women today are refreshingly direct an
honest...and their dress is an exten
honesty. However, men seem to feel if teasing i
Eve wants, Eve-teasing is what she

A bare body
not as stagge
at a street-c

The male viewpoints:

"Women don't realize that their flashy dresses or the war-paint — which 'battlescars' their youthful complexion too soon — may ensnare only the wrong kind of man and make him turn violent while Mr. Right remains indifferent," says Khusro, a newsreporter whose passion is poetry. Having decided that "a woman always dresses to create a certain effect" and that "in this sense she is both the surveyor and the surveyed," K. promptly squashes over-exposure as "sending out intimation signals to indicate she is easy prey" which is why, he adds, the response she inevitably elicits is "sharkish!"

"I would not associate dress with character," rebuffs Eric Kanga, sales training manager in a reputed concern, "It is more of an attitude reflecting the spirit of the times!" He also disagrees that daring dresses by themselves are trouble-shooters in cities for, he feels, even villainous eyes are already overfed on such sights. "Thirty years ago I would have whistled at an undressed ankle, while today braless teens roam around unabashed. It is all a matter of changing norms — see my sideburns?" Besides, as he correctly points out, "the compulsive Romeo," whose bottom-pinching is a back-lash against several inner complexes (we will return to him later) can attack even the plainest of Janes when she is dressed in her primmest."

Pachoo, an executive who is terrific with facts and figures (technically, law and accounts) is not against trendy clothes, but within the trap — sorry — wrappings of decency and morality. "There is no question of violence if a girl dresses to suit the occasion," he argues, "a see-through at a disco is normal. It would not provoke violence (I mean overtly, not covertly) as a bikini in a temple might!"

A raw opinion came from Badsha, my **dhobi**, who just croaked "Hai Ram!" when I asked him to describe the "aajkal ki ladki." "Bil kul besaram!" was the stinging verdict of his spouse Budhiya. The reason? "Naa saadi, naa odhni!" Their teenage-son, however, slunk behind me to whisper "Arre saab, sub ki sub heroine jaisi chalti hain" (here he paused to illustrate a swingy jaunt) "aur shikaar ho gayee, to Bachao! Bachao!" (here he screeched in a shrill falsetto). The gist — if teasing is what the eve does,

Women may show their cleavage — but the men have their shirts open down to there!

this

pect!

h is
ould be

-teasing is what she must ex-
t!

All women's dresses are
rely variations on the eternal
ggle between the admitted
ire to dress and the unadmitt-
desire to undress," alleged
Yutang. But if the women
ay are getting sunburnt in
es they never did before,
ang would be horrified to
that the men are getting
ally adept in letting the
eze tickle their bare torsos
le the gaping "V" of their
iad shirt-fronts yawns right
n to you-know-what! Then
e are milord's trousers,
ht in the wrong places and
e in the wrong places, so
don't know where to look!"
lady succintly put it. Peep
the bottles in his bathroom
you know where those over-
ering waves of maleness that
exudes come from — which
goes to show that he is as
nch a member of the cos-
ccult as you or me, and it
ot even a recent affectation,
there is this tomb in Egypt
se inscription reads, "Over-
of the Cosmetic-Box, Cos-
c-Pencil and Sandal-Bearer
to the King!" So admit it guys! — with apologies to Oscar Wilde — your fashions may differ from ours, but are your designs any different?

Yet double standards prevail — the slum-dandy who dons a flamming orange two-piece is immediately hailed as "Hero" or even "Guru," while a lewd pass greets the slum-beauty who preens a little. Higher up on the ladder, a date who dresses "differently" is great to display at "hep" parties but she is not for that take-home-to-mother trip. "A man is allowed to blaspheme the world because it belongs to him to damn" (Shulamith Firestone — The Dialectic of Sex), for you see, the trump card is up his sleeve; so what if female libido can, at times, even exceed that of a male? He can still get away with the worst kinds of exposure, because — a woman cannot rape a man!

Her re-discovery of a separate identity is making the New Woman think different, dress different.

Leave alone anything as drastic, society shudders at the slightest display of female strength. As Simone de Beauvoir describes it, at every step you are warned that "to be femine is to appear weaker, futile, docile. Any self-sertion will diminish femininity and attractiveness," but then "anger or revolt that does not get into the muscle" leads to a "profound frustration not to be able to register one's feelings upon the face of the world," and it is "this hostility" said a staffer from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, "nursed over the centuries at being holed up in a subordinate role that has perhaps erupted into violent dress-forms" (she actually saw a girl sporting a T-shirt with "juice-box" printed over its front) and this, in turn, goads the brute in man to further brutality.

Yes, hot pants or halters can send your senses swimming, but is the way we dress the only

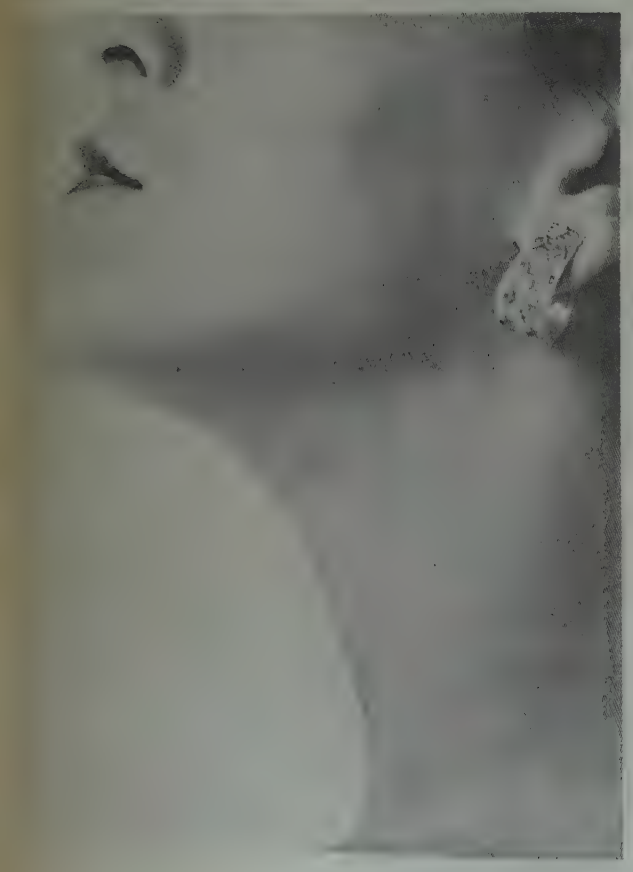
Continued on page 49

LEFT: The eternal struggle between the admitted desire to dress and the unadmitted desire to undress.

Photograph at right:
Girish Shukla

Rest by
Farokh Reporter

Sometime, somewhere your skin gives your age away



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the time...

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and the place...

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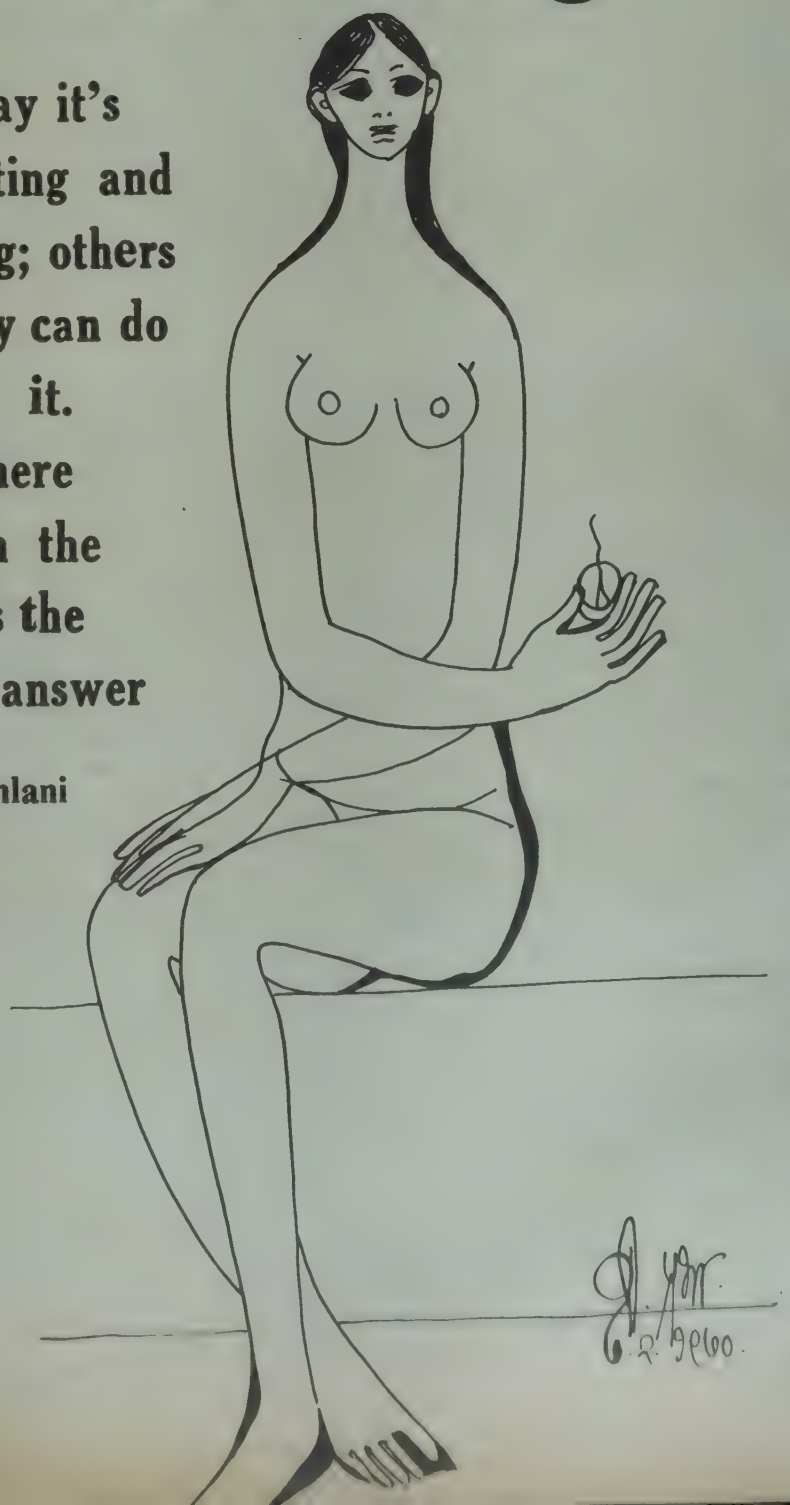
is sex necessary ?

Some say it's like eating and drinking; others say they can do without it. Somewhere between the two lies the correct answer

Ratu Kamlani



"She flares up at the slightest provocation. She will pick a fight with you at the drop of a hat. She is cantankerous, irritable, difficult to talk to. She keeps everything bottled up inside her. Do you know why she is like that? She's thirty five and still unmarried. She's sexually frustrated." Q.E.D.

Such slighting remarks are commonly hurled at spinsters -- below or above the age of 35. But such deductions are not necessarily true. Like **Deepa**, a copywriter, who has been separated from her husband for the past seven years, said, "Frustration is a part of the game of life. Why blame it on sex alone?"

For there are many married women who become overly aggressive or overly withdrawn or timid even though they do experience sex. On the other hand, there are those unmarried women who, despite the lack of sexual relationships, are sweet-natured and perfectly adjusted to their milieu. And then, of course, there are women like **Sita** "thirty five and still unmarried," who says, "You can be unmarried and not be sexually frustrated because you believe in extra-marital sex."

It depends on how important or how unimportant sex is to different people. To **Neelam** who has been married for ten years, sex is an essential part of life. "How can you live without it?" she asks. "It is like eating, drinking, sleeping — your body needs it. And it is the main factor that binds a marriage."

Deepa disagrees. "Sex didn't play a very large role in either holding together or breaking my marriage. There were other bonds which were much stronger than just sex — emotional and intellectual."

The single girl's approach to sex is quite different. Says **Sita**, cynically, "Men have wanted to convince women that sex is a necessity. It is not the be all and the end all of life, it is just one facet of life. If sex were all that important and wonderful as men would have us believe, why are there so many unhappy wives?"

Both **Sita** and **Hema**, another liberated, enlightened single girl, feel that in a city like Bombay there is scarcely any lack of opportunity to have sexual relationships. Both of them also feel that a woman should have sex to find out whether it is essential to her or not.

Says **Sita**, "Having experienced it, I can say it is not essential for me. I can do wihout it."

Says **Indu**: "It is a satisfaction of a basic urge. Once I know what sex is I don't crave for it. The more you suppress the need, the stronger is the craving. Once your desire is fulfilled you can transcend the physical to the spiritual plane. One can never be spiritually involved if one thinks of sexuality all the time."

Satyajit, the only sporting male who has been interviewed for this article, feels that sexual relations are necessary both for the male and the female. "It enhances one's personality," says **Satyajit**. "Sex helps you to shed your inhibitions. When you lie together in bed, your mind is totally open. You don't look at the other person through filters. Sex helps you to understand the other person completely.

"But for males, sex is something they **must** have. It is a release. One feels totally dissociated from tension; one's muscles are loose. That feeling of calm of mind, all passion spent, is essential for the male."

For most women, it would seem, the need to experience a "release" in that sense is not as compulsive. Some women say that "release" is obtained by sublimation of their sexual desires into other activities.

Take the case of **Bina** who was widowed tragically two months after marriage. Says **Bina**, "I had intercourse with my husband for barely two weeks when he became ill. Even when I had sex with him it wasn't so fulfilling because he was always tense. But in spite of that I enjoyed being with him, his touch aroused me. Now, I do miss it. I feel the urge but I manage to channelise it. I plunge myself into some activity." **Bina** has a full time job involving historical research and she spends her evenings attending M. A. classes in Ancient Indian Culture.

In a way, **Hema's** involvement with her career (she's a writer) and her involvement in spiritual activities could be regarded as a sublimation of the sexual urge But, says **Hema** defensively: "I am basically a spiritual person. My sexual desires have never been of an overpowering nature."

Sita also pooh-poohs the Freudian notion of sublimation of desires. **Sita** works full time at a local college, lecturing in Philosophy, and she is actively involved in stage management. But, she says, neither her career nor her theatrical involvement are a means of channelising her desires. "You sublimate your feelings and desires when you divert your attention to something else. I am with male friends all the time. We share professional interests, we have personal regard for each other, there is a sensitivity in the way we relate to each other which is far more necessary than just sex. If I want to have sex I can have it when I want. So where does sublimation come in?" So much for female "sexual release".

Another major difference in the male and female attitudes to sex is the association of emotions with sex. All the women interviewed quite categorically stated that they would not sleep indiscriminately with any male, for sheer lust, unless there was a marked degree of "emotional involvement" or "strong affection" for a man.

"For a man," revealed **Satyajit**, "it is not necessary to be emotionally involved with a woman for him to have sex with her. If a man finds a woman physically desirable, he can enjoy sex with her. It would be a purely physical pleasure."

Although, he admits, there cannot be a long lasting relationship based only on physical attraction. For a serious relationship there has to be sex plus an emotional bond, a commitment. But the fact remains that emotions need not play a major role in a sexual relationship as far as some men are concerned.

Whereas for a woman, says **Sita**, "It is definitely not just sex. Companionship is far more important. It's the whole feeling of being wanted and being cared for, and caring in return, which is important."

And **Hema** adds, 'If a woman has sex casually, without emotionally feeling for a man, it isn't satisfying in the least."

One wonders how much truth there is in the "myth" which surrounds the single woman and the frustrations which set in on account of her inability to have a continuous sexual relationship. Having experienced sex, isn't it frustrating, in a way, not being able to experience it when she pleases? For **Sita** has the inconvenient habit of falling for married males. But she denies being

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THE DENIAL OF FEMALE SEXUALITY

Jyoti Punwani

What is the nature of women's sexual feelings? How many women feel the way I do?

No book, no authority can answer the fears and doubts women have about their sexual needs. Because so far all discussion of sex has centred around the man and reflected men's feelings only. The sexual feelings of women have been portrayed only as responses to men's actions and, then, portrayed only by men. Women have been told what they should feel. It was left to the women's movement to let women tell it how it really is — what they, in fact, do feel.

In India, no research has yet been done on women's sexual feelings. But the research done in the US, by Masters and Johnson, by Kinsey and, finally, by Shere Hite, has revealed yet another discrimination in our male-dominated society — the neglect and, consequently, the denial of female sexuality.

> **Over the years, women have been brainwashed into believing that sex and sexual arousal are the prerogatives of males. Hence, the guilt feelings remain . . .**

Many women do not enjoy sex; many don't even know that they can; many who want to enjoy it don't know how — and there's no man who can tell them how — and, finally, many who do know how cannot enlighten their men.

A questionnaire answered by 14 working women in Bombay, all in their 20s (but not representative in any way) revealed a pattern of ignorance, embarrassment and guilt about their own sexuality.

Our first burden is that of ignorance. When we need to know about sex most, we find ourselves bewildered. Almost all parents and teachers tell us "the facts of life" (if at all) too late — long after we've experienced some sort of sexual arousal/awakening. "My mother wouldn't dream of talking about sexual pleasure to an unmarried girl. Most parents wait till we're grown up, by which time we manage to learn quite a lot," said Tina, 24 and unmarried.

Most of us remember feeling confused the first time we felt aroused, whether at age eight, fourteen, or twenty-three! And even ashamed: "I became conscious of my body when my breasts began to swell. Of course I was sort of ashamed of my so-called "wicked" feelings," recalled Shiela.

And even the most technical explanation of sex leaves out exactly which female sexual organs are involved during lovemaking. For most of us, "that area" is unknown territory, rarely if ever looked at, ("too ugly" was one 50-year-old's reason) and regarded with a mixture of shame and distaste. Gayatri, 25, summed up what the others had to say: "I take my genitals for granted. I must have looked at them once or twice, but never fully. They are just OK, maybe a little ugly. I know I'm being prudish, but I'd hate anyone to look at them, even my future husband, or a close female friend. In one sense, I take them for granted; in another, I'm conscious of them to the extent of not wanting anyone to see them. I guess in a vague, subconscious way I'm ashamed of them."

Lovemaking changes this attitude in some women. Three of them said that when they were aroused, their genitals felt like "something special." Uma admitted, "At first I hated it (and still feel a bit 'exposed') when my husband looked at them while making love; but at the same time I grew to accept them only because he told me he found them beautiful and fascinating."

Ignorance about as basic a thing as the organs involved in lovemaking (though most women said they knew, almost none could exactly identify their external organs — leave alone the internal ones) is coupled for us with ignorance of the nature of the sexual experience — till we do it ourselves. As Nalini said, "I was absurdly innocent when my boyfriend first touched me. I didn't know my body could feel pleasurable when touched!"

Most of us think of sex with dread, having heard it described by older women as an unpleasant marital experience which only men crave for. All of us, however, do feel some sort of sexual arousal, which at a certain stage, is recognised as distinctly pleasurable. At once shame and guilt take over, ("only whores enjoy sex") and prevent us from enjoying the experience. Gayatri remembered, "My mother told me when I was eight, that female genitals should be locked up. The first time I was kissed, at 23, I felt guilty for enjoying it, though the pleasure may not even have been sexual, just an acting out of a teenage stereotyped romantic fantasy. But despite all my rationalizations, I could not get rid of the feeling (and still can't) that sex and sexual arousal should only be felt and experienced after marriage. Even now, I enjoy whatever limited purely sexual contact I have with my boyfriend for a few brief seconds, till my guilt overwhelms me. I try my best not to find out what pleases me sexually. Though he asks me, I shy away from the subject and prefer to neglect my physical feelings, because then I feel less guilty about my clandestine relationship, which satisfies me so completely in every other way."

So we deny ourselves what our bodies insist on feeling and only yield (if at all) when our sexual explorations are accompanied with that magic ingredient that all of us are conditioned into believing is essential for sex—love. A few women admitted being turned on by casual male friends but could never bring themselves to have a "casual affair" with any of them: "I know this is part of the ridiculous traditional attitude that says that a woman should not feel comfortable in the presence of any man other than her husband, and though I can relax with other men, I can't break out of my conditioning enough to sleep with any of them," said Radha, who had broken out of many ridiculous traditions. Uma said she could let herself go "only after I was sure of his and my commitment," while Shiela laid down "complete emotional and mental love" as a condition for having an orgasm!

Ignorance, shame and guilt prevent us from knowing, accepting and realising our own sexual needs and realising our own sexual needs and feelings. Hence the sexual act for most of us, is a situation over which we have no control, in which we are helpless to whatever little degree, even we may enjoy it.

Whether with lover or husband — we are the initiated. Nandita, 24, who is living with her boyfriend, said, "Since most of us don't know much, we assume that the man will sort of be in command the first time." He generally remains in command at all times. He follows his sexual instincts. If the experience is pleasurable for us, it is by chance. Otherwise, it becomes what one of the 3000 women who speak out frankly about their sex lives in the Hite Report described it as: "He jumped on and rode." The others' description reveal their cynical attitude and their resignation: "Most of the men I've slept with have had absolutely no idea of what I want and need and no interest in finding out." "A lot of it used to be get it up, get it in, and get it out." "In and out.' "Small amount of foreplay then intercourse till he comes, The End." "Preliminaries, then he jumps on top and all of a sudden I don't matter any more." "Just kiss, feel, finger and f—. Then come and light a cigarette." "Take what you can get and don't give any." "I'm beginning to think there must be something like a sexual 'Rules of Order' which every guy follows." "There is a pattern, but it's too boring to tell about." "The only pattern that I can discern is that of brevity. Men arrive and depart as if they had a round trip ticket." "How most men have tried. . . can be summed up as Insert A into B. Dulldulldull." In our survey, Nalini, a 23-year-old said, "The traditional missionary position is such that the woman has to be passive and gets pleasure out of it only accidentally, by indirect pressure on the clitoris. You must be free to change."

If a woman is lucky, she may get an experienced man who knows that she needs much more gentleness, tenderness, much more "cuddling and foreplay" than he does.

Radha admitted that she is not always satisfied physically after making love. "I would like it to take a longer time, but I don't feel it's all that important." 'I

hate mechanical, tired sex. I really enjoy lovemaking only when I have all the time in the world — at least an hour — and all the energy too, to just relax and fool around before the 'real thing'," said Uma.

If a woman is luckier, she may get a considerate man, who instead of assuming that he knows already, asks her whether what he does pleases or hurts her — NOT "What do you like?" a question which leaves most of us groping for words and for the frankness to tell our men whatever little we know of our own sexual likes and dislikes. For, few of us who know what pleases us at all sexually, can shed our complexes enough to tell men on our own.

"I can't tell him because we don't discuss sex frankly," wrote one, while another said, "He's not the type to take into consideration others' views. He sticks to the same routine. It would be absolutely useless telling him because he's a prude and he'll get angry and think I'm a sex-starved nymphomaniac!"

Hampered by inhibitions and not enough awareness, many women sometimes do end up pretending to some extent. While most do not go to the extent of faking orgasm (even the unmarried ones were sure they would never be so "untrue to themselves"), many others do so to the extent of pretending to be "more satisfied than I really am because I don't want to lessen his obvious happiness by making him feel guilty," or, "when he's so warm and loving afterwards, I don't think it's worth making an issue of — unless being left dissatisfied becomes a pattern."

If a woman is really really lucky, she gets somebody who's both experienced and considerate and who loves her as a person. "I've only been to bed a few times," said Geeta, "but he wasn't a typical male. He was very concerned about me and didn't use me." One woman wrote, "He always asks me what I like best and I have told him on my own too, because he's made me feel at ease about sex."

As things are, the awareness, acceptance and realisation of our sexual needs lie not in our hands. As everywhere else, we are dependent even for expressing some thing as personal as our sexuality on men. And that is what's wrong with sexual relationships today. Not that women may not achieve orgasm everytime they make love. Not that we may not even enjoy sex everytime we do it. But that we are not able to be in a position to express ourselves as we want to. We cannot always choose — whether to make love or not: "Intercourse satisfies me only when I'm in the mood for it. I hate it when I'm forced to do it," wrote one married woman; whether to have an orgasm or not. All the women didn't feel it was essential always. Nandita said, "The tension of wanting it, striving for it, got me too engrossed and tensed me up so much some time ago, that I couldn't enjoy lovemaking at all, and consequently neither could he. Now I'm more relaxed about it. If you get there, that's great; if you don't, there's plenty else to enjoy." And Radha discovered that wanting it everytime and not getting it "was making me too irritable and taking up too much of my thoughts. I decided it wasn't worth that much — there are too many other things in a relationship than just that."

But today few of us have the choice — we are more passive recipients than actively doing what we enjoy. What is wrong is that we are mostly helpless and frustrated in expressing our sexual needs, that even sex becomes something "given and received" at one partner's pleasure, not something mutually shared and equally enjoyed by both. If in spite of all this women did and still do enjoy lovemaking, it is because gradually men are becoming aware that our needs are different, and because of the feeling of "closeness, love, togetherness," because it "expresses love beautifully and excitingly" — all emotional qualities, which all the women thought were more important than the physical act itself. But lovemaking does express an unequal relationship in most cases — however liberated both partners may be from following sexual stereotypes.

Radha could see no possibility of there being "total freedom to tell him what pleases me. I took the initiative once in discussing all this with him, and left him feeling absolutely nervous! He had no idea of all of the complexities involved. A lot depends on the relationship, on our own inhibitions and on how we tell them." "The whole process seems to take so long for a woman," said Nandita, "that sometimes you almost despair of getting there and think, why make him wait so long unnecessarily. Sometimes you feel very demanding and exacting and wonder whether it takes as long for other women too." "He has asked me, but often I get exasperated and wish he'd ask more often!" said Uma.

To achieve the "growing relationship" described by Nalini, in which "both learn together by trial and error what pleases us," there must be, firstly a discussion between women themselves of what we lack, what we want and need and how to achieve it. A discussion between women because initially only they can help one another by sharing their feelings. Nothing helps more than to know that you are not the only one out, the only "frigid" one who takes so long to get aroused, the only "nymphomaniac" who has lively sexual desires.

What is needed too is the re-education of men about women's sexual feelings — a point about which all (except one) women, however great their lovemaking was, agreed; so that "men don't take women for granted as being willing whenever they want to pounce on them;" "frustration in a woman which makes her moody and depressed can be prevented;" "men can have a better understanding of what a woman really feels, needs and wants, which would result in a perfect intercourse." Gayatri felt that "the ones who need re-education are perhaps the basically insensitive types whose selfishness is carried over into sex. So I wonder if merely re-education about sex will help — maybe what they need is re-education about women generally and all the stereotypes they have been fed with about them."

It's not as though our sexuality is the most important thing in our lives. But it is yet another part of our personalities which our unequal society and culture distorts.

For both male and female sexuality to be realized fully, what would be really needed is a change in social attitudes that bind women and stultify and negate their personalities with inhibitions. An atmosphere in which women can be fearless and independent enough to challenge social authority and both men and women can be full, complex human beings, breaking out of their stereotypes to explore their human potential and control their own lives.

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THE SEXUAL FEARS OF MEN

Chaitanya Kalbag

Perhaps Kinsey would have an exhilarating time if he were to conduct a survey among young Indian men on their sexual fears and phobias. We have a long way to go before we attain the permissiveness of the West, say some wise men. But what strikes any observer is the fact that, more than thirty years after we freed ourselves from the shackles of colonialism, we are yet to liberate ourselves from the clutches of a sexual paranoia that is rooted in superstition, tradition, and "old brides' tales."

One of the ironies of being an Indian male seems to be that far from being an assertive, aggressive and authoritative sexual brute, he is very often a timid, confused, and reluctant creature. Most people (usually women) are taken in by the veneer of confidence and put-on bravado that disguises his bewilderment.

According to a young man who has seen more of life since he went to the United States to study, "We lack basic information about matters sexual. What do you get here? Whispered nonsense from your repressed friends, stern rebukes from your parents, and an occasional and furtive glance at pornographic photographs under your school desk. Nobody really tells young people what it is all about."

"Sex is a terrifying prospect," says **A**, a well-built engineer working for a leading firm. "When it comes to the ABC of the thing, I'm as ignorant as a kid in the kindergarten."

N had a traumatic experience when he got married. He had amiably subjected himself to the routine of an arranged marriage. The girl had come from a respectable family, and the gifts and goodwill at the wedding had made conjugal life seem quite rosy. "Everything went wrong," says **N** morosely. "My wife is as scared about sex as I am, and it has all along been a groping, juvenile sort of experience, with all the attendant disappointments. I suppose we will have a kid one of these days, and then things will cool off very rapidly."

One surprising feature of this sexual ignorance that I came across is the fact that most young men try to glean their knowledge from books — fiction in most cases. A bookstore owner told me about how he used to be amused at first at the surreptitious manner in which male customers would sidle in, leaf through the more erotically-titled books, and then, very much like in **Summer of '42**, buy their choice as though they were exchanging State secrets with an enemy spy. Later, the bookstore owner says, he was more saddened than amused: "What good can Sasthi Brata do to these people in terms of education?"

A psychiatrist, who is a counsellor in a city college and has many boys coming to him with problems connected with sex, says that most men end up with very idealistic and excessively romanticized ideas about sex from such encounters with the printed word, and that the real experience very often leaves the man shattered.

"I had visions about sweeping some girl off her feet and into my bedroom," says **R**, a successful young management trainee. "I was scared and excited at the same time about the idea, and felt that my position, and my education, would make things easier. What do you think happened. . .?"

S was a pale young Sybarite who in college came across a one-in-a-million girl who was able and willing. "But when it was just around the corner, I discovered that I was absolutely ignorant about sex, and decided that I'd do something desperate, put myself through a crash sex-education course, just so that I wouldn't flop when the great moment came."

For a classroom, **S** chose a call-girl's dingy bedroom, after some secretive telephoning and a hefty payment. It was an expensive mistake, discovered **S**. He was unable to perform satisfactorily, he told me, and his hopes of being a success with his girl crashed to the ground.

Some young men I spoke to had resorted to the extreme measure of visiting a "sex clinic," and came away with a sour taste in their mouths. Others had approached counsellors who more often than not did not sympathise with, or even understand the dilemma facing these persons.

Barrel-chested Romeos proclaim they are 'super' in bed. The truth is they feel confused, inadequate, threatened, when confronted with sex. In short, they are plain scared!

Ignorance about sex and the various allied manifestations of this ignorance are probably peculiar to societies that are particularly taboo-ridden and prudish — as our society certainly is.

However, there are several other fears that men have about sex which are perhaps more universal. **J** gave serious thought to the subject and came up with the following points.

One of the biggest stumbling blocks men have to overcome in their sexual lives is their fear of inadequacy, which takes on a number of forms.

For one thing, just as women have to contend with the physical ideal of the sexy woman (Sophia Loren, Jacqueline Bisset, Mumtaz, Zeenat Aman) men have to tussle with the ideal image of the masculine, virile, potent, devastating, "macho" man (Sean Connery, Richard Burton, Marlon Brando, Vinod Khanna, Dharmendra). Since not all men can look like these ideals or exude the sexiness they seem to do almost unconsciously, the feeling that they are physically "lesser" beings and that their women might be disappointed in their "inferior" physique often troubles the "ordinary" man.

Secondly, there is the fear that they might not be able to perform at the crucial moment. This form of the fear of inadequacy is heightened by the fact that they don't look like the "macho" role-models or feel as confident as the heroes of novels and films — James Bond, for instance, seems to be able to rise to the occasion even after a day full of chases, hunts, shoot-outs, tortures and all the rest that is packed into 24 hours of 007's life.

The fear of inadequacy also fills many men with apprehension about being able to please a woman. For many men (and, in India at least, many women) female sexuality is something vague and distant, about which they know little or nothing. And, with talk of the elusive female orgasm coming closer to home, some men feel ill-equipped to bring their women to it.

A second major phobia that men face today, said **J**, is that of being dominated by the woman. Especially now when some women are becoming more conscious of their sexuality and their right to sensual pleasure, they may try to tell their husband or lover what they would and would not like them to do. This is a breaking away from the traditional pattern, even in sex, of the aggressive male and the passive female, and many men who are confronted with it feel threatened, unable to accept it.

Coupled with this is a fear that these "dominating" women might be insatiable, said **J**.

The bug-bear of "incompatibility" is, of course, a fear that men and women share. And some men live in dread of being compared to other men the woman has known.

A major fear that many men share is the fear of hurting the woman, especially when she is a virgin.

Everyone was, above all, very reluctant to speak about sexual fears and phobias. Most men seemed to be afraid of not being "up to the mark" in the bedroom, and one got the impression that the slightest rebuff from a partner would send such a man into a depressed withdrawal. "It's very frightening and intriguing, too," says **R**. "It's like walking a tightrope over some inviting water and not knowing when you'll slip and fall in and what the water finally will turn out to be."

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BRAHAMACHARYA — is it a fad?

P. Kumse

India's cultural heritage, spirituality and the rest of it have been proclaimed so often that many Indians like me wonder whether we truly belong to this country. And yet, we are better off because we have none of those hang-ups, no desire to prove either our spirituality or fondness for the present fad for **brahamacharya.**

Brahamacharya is the first of the four stages in a man's life. Having merrily gone through all the activities of life and those imposed by **grahasthashram,** some of us have fashionably started talking about brahamacharya and relate it to spirituality. It is ironic that such a religious outlook has drifted down from the upper society circles to the others.

In a more truthful manner it has to be accepted that spirituality does not automatically walk in to co-habitate with brahamacharya. The stress, therefore, is false and certainly not a part of the Indian character or its psyche. Brahamacharya is only a yo-yo type of fad, a fashionable hang-up.

The relationship between self-imposed celibacy and spirituality needs a close examination.

When Gandhiji spoke of brahamacharya, it was more in keeping with his ideas of self-control. It could lead to greatness as human beings, not necessarily to spirituality.

Self-control is needed in so many spheres today, that by just becoming a brahamachari one cannot attain spirituality and yet continue to do whatever else his weaknesses demand. There are known to be so many varieties of brahamacharis, some indulging in ganja, some in crime and some just pretending to be brahamacharis, but behaving in a manner which is exactly the opposite of what they claim to be. All of them will take Gandhiji's name with the greatest of impunity.

Much of Indian philosophy is related to the Gita and the Ramayana. Whereas we tend to talk about these two for lectures, we fail to understand the truths implied in the stories; and the truth certainly did not speak of brahamacharya with a fervour that some of today's "celibacy clan" claim. The main figures in the Gita are Krishna, Arjuna and Pandavas.

None can deny that Lord Krishna, who is being worshipped all over the country, was spiritual. Yet, there are any number of stories about him and the Gopis. There may be other connotations than the non-celibate ones. Nevertheless, can it be said that the association of Lord Krishna and the Gopis projects him as a brahamachari?

Arjuna symbolises one's duty to a cause, unmindful of the consequences. All of us are expected to do our duty to whatever cause we proclaim. However, Arjuna, who is held up as a symbol, could not have been in existence if brahamacharya had been practised. Since it was not, was the land devoid of spirituality? Or, take the Pandavas. They represent the ordinary people, you and me. They represent the position which really belongs to us. Was theirs a different form of brahamacharya, when all the five of them were married to the same woman?

> **Celibacy is supposed to have spiritual connotations but a lot of men who pretend to be brahamacharis are the opposite of what they claim to be!**

Going even earlier, it is difficult to relate brahamarcharya and spirituality in the affairs of our Gods and Goddesses. Parvati failed to reach Siva in the traditional enchantress style and used a method which can be called spiritual to reach him. Here was spirituality leading to a practitioner of brahamacharya. Of course, their union converted Siva into **"ardh-nareshwar"** a complete fusion of the male and the female. Such a union may be called spiritual, but certainly cannot disprove brahamacharya.

As Dr. S. Radhakrishnan said in an essay, sex life is not inconsistent with spiritual attainment. Wild life or unrestrained passion is inconsistent with it.

Hermitage, or a hermit-type of life, is likely to become equated to brahamacharya. This is the root cause of the hang-up; because, one can lead the life of a householder, a life having sex and yet be a hermit in temper.

An analysis of the objectives of the brahamacharyaites would reveal that they claim their goal as spirituality and serenity. However, the true goal remains joy and serenity. Joy is fulfilment of one's nature as a human being. The manner in which God has constructed human beings, He certainly did not have brahamacharya in view.

None would deny that sex is a primary instinct. If it has to be given up, it cannot straightaway be replaced by spirituality. It would be pure hogwash to ignore the psychology of man. It is only because of habits that certain instincts become secondary from primary as man develops. Therefore, what are the habits that must replace the sexual instinct during an interim period, before spirituality takes over?

Respect others and keep a distance, because nothing is so displeasing as the notion of close personal contact with them. To many, it may become unpleasant to just sit down in a chair still warm from occupancy by another person's body; hand-shaking can become disagreeable.

As Willian. James points out in his "Principles of Psychology," the development of the sexual appetite in an abnormal way may check its normal development. This is a well-ascertained medical fact. From this one can automatically conclude that normal development will mostly exclude chances of unrestricted development.

If it is abstinence — it should really be control as per the demands of the given social situations. Blind propagation of brahamacharya, almost like slogan-shouting for an unknown, untried and business-minded candidate sure to fail during elections, is not likely to succeed.

The ghastly massacre of innocents perpetrated by religious fanatics known as the Lal Kurta sect in 1973 in Alamgarh gives the lie to **sadhus** and brahamacharis. In 1977, an article exposed the heartlessness of religious priests in Bihar who were said to have murdered sharecroppers, amassed vast fortunes and continued to exploit landless peasants and harijans. All were said to be brahamacharis!

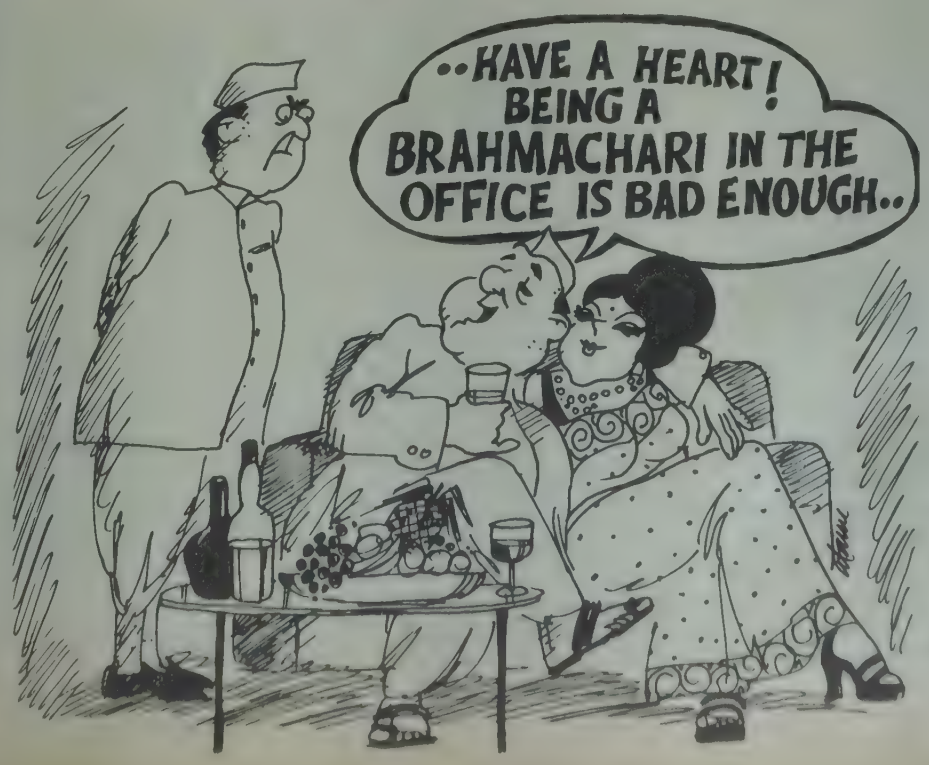
Take the case of young Balyogeswar. He married his much older secretary and it was celebrated by his blind followers. So much for brahamacharya!

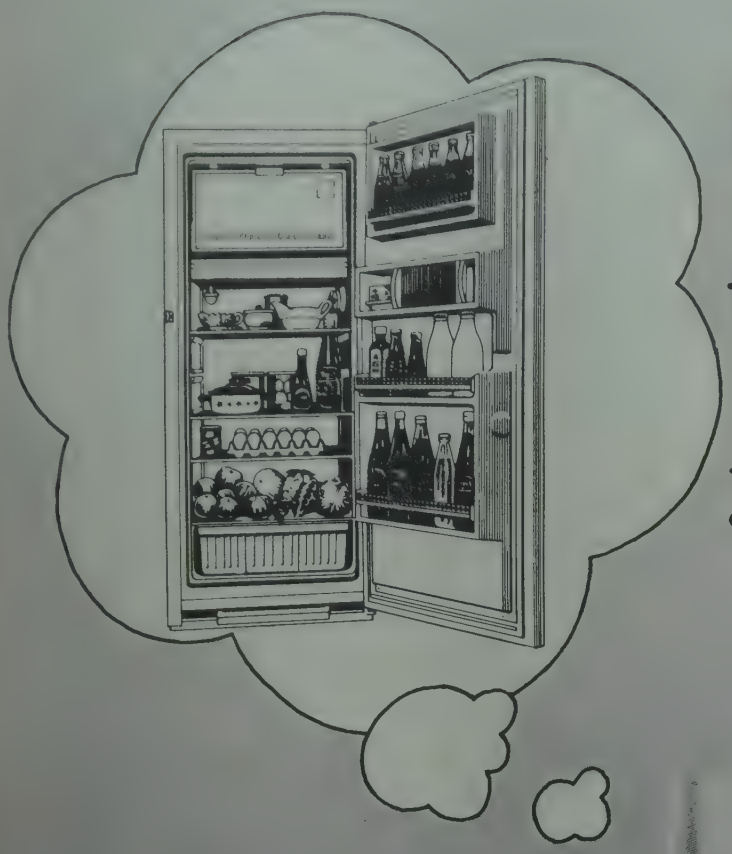
In reality, spirituality and brahamacharya are not at opposite poles. An increasingly larger number of persons are realising this. Many spiritual leaders are known to be married, have families of their own and still serve as beacons of light for thousands of others. One such being whom I have met, is Dadaji. A married man, he certainly has not been a brahamachari in the false and fashionable manner which is now proclaimed.

Correspondingly, there certainly are a few pure **sanyasis** and brahamacharis. But they are only a few. When the idea gains the status of a craze and becomes fashionable, when every second person attempts to achieve the spirituality that only a few can gain, then it becomes self-negating.

Moreover, men need to cling to some "divine being" like a drowning man, but if everyone starts to become a "divine being," the "khel" will end.

Finally, the result of a normal human being with normal aptitudes and impulses taking to brahamacharya would only result in a split personality. When such personalities are developed, their psychologists will tell them to chase themselves since (being brahamacharis) they are not supposed to chase the more attractive ones of the species.





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SEX OUTSIDE MARRIAGE

Nilima Kulkarni

It's talked of as "sin" and the woman (but not the man) who indulges in it is termed "loose." But these are not morally depraved people...they are merely reacting to circumstances

For most stolid, "respectable" folks, pre-marital or extra-marital sex, is something which occurs in fiction, "true confessions", films or amongst those few who inhabit the footpaths and slums. But all this is in any case too for away from their own lives for it to have much of an impact or any semblance of reality for them. It is only for a very few people that sex outside of marriage ties is an accepted fact, in the sense that they acknowledge its existence. This may be due to either their own experience or those of very close friends. But even they feel that this happens only amongst the elite of society.

So when I was faced with writing about the topic, I was a little stumped. I knew how a few people with my sort of background would react: "It's the business of those concerned, so why discuss it?" But what about all those people who milled around me in the evening rush to Churchgate? What about all those uncles and aunts and cousins of mine and millions more like them? What about those who worked and worked but barely eked out a living? How would they react to the subject? How did "morality" and uptight customs affect them?

In an effort to know the reactions of at least one section of all these people who confronted me — the older generation — I casually started chatting about it with my mother. To my surprise she came up with a series of cases that she had come across or heard about. There was the case of this lady — beautiful, young and intelligent — married off by her parents to a much older man, with hardly any plus points to recommend himself. She looked for comfort and appreciation somewhere else and after the death of her husband lived with her lover, along with her kids.

And then there was the couple — both intelligent — who met, worked together, fell in love, and started living together. Theirs was a relationship based on mutual respect and understanding and the relationships in both cases did not lack anything because of not being "legal."

On the other hand, one comes across numerous examples where couples go on living together for no better reason than that they happened to have gone around a fire seven times or said a few words, the meaning of which has been washed away by years of meaningless living.

The point to note about these people who had a sexual relationship outside of the "sacred" marriage tie, is that they are all normal people. The type who at a casual look at their lives only reveal the placid happiness of any married couple. Just people caught up in circumstances over which they try to get some control. And for that reason, courageous. For it is not easy to face the envious wrath of a deprived society towards those who have broken away and dared to challenge it.

From childhood it is dinned into us that sex outside of marriage is a sin. Each generation bequeaths upon the next a legacy of sin. The result, and especially in traditional societies like ours, is to mythify not only the concept of sex, but also of any relationship between the sexes. This eventually results in the most warped forms of interaction. It may be in the form of eve-teasing, or of covering up sexual attraction with a shroud of "brother-sister" relationship or in a highly unnatural romanticised affair, or through promiscuous relationships.

It is not surprising therefore that even the few people who do have a fairly sane attitude to sex, who may even have premarital sex, always have a sense of lingering guilt and tension. The guilt arises due to years of massive conditioning. The tension because of worries which include the fear of pregnancy and the fear of being found out. This naturally affects the emotional relationship between two individuals. Sometimes, this also arises due to the man's lack of sensitivity to what the woman is undergoing. It is inevitably more difficult for a woman to get over her inhibitions regarding sexual matters — and after all the consequences, if any, affect women more directly than men — and the man who may be more carefree in his attitude, just fails to understand her fears.

One interesting thing is that it is not always those women who appear to be most "hep" or "mod", that get over their inhibitions at all. Very often the quiet, intelligent, thinking sorts are the ones who have a better attitude to sex. They take sex as a natural part of a relationship, which, though important, is only one aspect. Though they do not go in for promiscuous relationships, they don't shy away from sex as "morally degrading". They manage to keep their priorities balanced in their perfectly serious relationships, which perhaps get an added depth due to sex.

Here the attitude of both the men and women is one of mutual respect and there is a striving to have a really deep and serious relationship which may end in marriage. If it doesn't, then there is enough maturity for them to part without malice.

On the other hand however, one comes across some men, often from more well-to-do backgrounds, who see women as nothing but sexual objects.

There is little respect or understanding and even the little that may (just may) exist, vanishes when they get the woman into bed. And eventually of course both the men and women of this type end up marrying persons of their parents' choice.

Hence all daughters hear the oft-repeated admonishment from their mothers: "Always be careful, however much he loves you, if you are too free with him he'll lose respect for you." This of course is next only to the what-will-people-say-warning. But talking to many youngsters, I noticed, that where there was the confidence of a healthy relationship, based on understanding, the fear of losing respect didn't come in.

Marriage somehow brings about a change in the previous relationship. A chat with some young newly-weds who had known their husbands previously and had had sexual relationships with them, revealed that there is less of spontaneity in a physical relationship after marriage. Partly this is due to new responsibilities, new tensions, but partly also because now there is always the feeling that "well, there is tomorrow after all." Whereas previously, meeting each other and the opportunity of having sex was limited, which increased the urgency. Also if there are other people staying in the house, there is a feeling of embarrassment.

If middle-class people have space problems, the condition of the slum dwellers and footpath dwellers is much worse. And it is inevitable that in such conditions, the children have some experience of sex very early. Though one would expect "morality" in such places to be non-existent, that is, one would not expect them to have any concept of what is "right" and what is "wrong", this is not the case. Though relationships outside sex are less censured, a fairly strict morality generally governs their lives — the morality of the upper classes.

The cause of most extra-marital affairs is an unsatisfactory relationship betwen husband and wife. This dissatisfaction may arise out of a number of circumstances ranging from, an illiterate, unglamorous woman, married to a social climber, to a too inhibited wife.

For the woman, one of the reasons may be being married to a man with many vices or to an unattentive husband. Or in some cases it may just be the simple fact that husband and wife just cannot get on together as there is no basis for the relationship.

Marriage is an institution evolved by man with which he sought to best regulate his social life. But every institution, with its particular values and customs, outgrows the necessity out of which it arose and becomes an encumbrance. This is not meant to be a cry for the abolition of marriage or a banner for instituting promiscuity. But it is a call to infuse into marriage and the relationship between husband and wife, new values, new attitudes, which would bring to it greater meaning and would perhaps provide a slightly healthier, saner society.

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MOD FASHIONS

Continued from page 37

factor leading to sexual assault? Marie Lobo of the Department of Medical and Psychiatric Social Work, T.I.S.S., does not think so, True, she has noticed "naked reactions" to suggestive attire, from the mentally ill; but speaking of the thousands who have stormed the cities like a tidal wave in search of jobs she says, "They work and live in dingy surroundings, often working in shifts to share sleeping-space. Healthy recreations like games or creative releases like music are inaccessible. Equally out-of-reach is the grossly exaggerated Aphrodite or Venus with her 'oomphy' statistics."

The advertising world is also paying a lot more attention to exhibiting the body in a sexually stimulating manner — and therefore the girl at the bus-stop (whose behind he slaps) is not the sole instigator; rather, she is the shock-absorber of his pent-up anger against a society that fails to satisfy his needs.

Normally, a tantalising cleavage may focus attention but it will provoke violence "only in a fraction of people who do not have the culture to sublimate their feelings and make them socially acceptable," Marie smiles. But as Kate Millet grumbles in her "Sexual Politics, "the female is rendered innocuous by her socialization. Before assault she is almost universally defenceless both by her physical and emotional training." So, while the move to dress as you like in a cliche-ridden society is courageous, unless the eve employs discretion in her choice "she may have to pay a price for being a creature of moods."

Trapped as a woman is within the biology of a pair of breasts or a trim waist or seductive hips, it is so easy to lay the blame at her door for a man's trespass. But does a woman really want to provoke a violence which makes her the victim? Instead of curbing his own excesses a male no doubt finds it more convenient to restrict her freedom. Regarding a legislation to prevent the increase in assaults on women, Golda Meir is reported to have said, "It is the men who are attacking the women. If there's to be a curfew, let the men stay at home!"

So the wave of change has set in, bringing with it heady doses of freedom. "Young people today are so refreshingly open, direct — their dress is an extension of this honesty — I don't damn them for it," says Marie.

IS SEX NECESSARY?

Continued from page 39

frustrated. "It would become evident in my relationships with the people around me, specially in my attitude to my students. If I became irritable or started snapping at them without any reason I'd say I was frustrated. So far in all the ten years at College I have never felt that way. If I did, I'd go sleep with a man. A teacher owes that much to her students."

And **Deepa**, who hasn't had a regular sexual life for the past seven years — although she gets emotionally involved frequently— says a break from regular sex has given her a chance to **grow** as a person. "I have always been very independent. I used to be very uncompromising during my marriage. Now I'm ready to persuade rather than pronounce. I find myself expressing facets of my personality I wasn't even aware of before. This development has taken place partly as a result of my emotional involvement with people, though not completely. Perhaps I have more time to get to know myself now. . ."

All those interviewed felt there was a definite need for sex education and all of them, without exception, were in favour of some form of sexual experience— not necessarily intercourse — for both the male and the female, before marriage.

Said 21-year-old **Anita**, a language student from JNU, 'There's so much you are unaware of if you haven't had sex. It is as if one part of you hasn't grown up at all. . . Most girls get married without knowing anything about sex, in fact that is what attracts them to marriage — sex. That's no basis for a good marital relationship. It is essential to know a few men before getting married. Finally it helps to develop the marital relationship itself, because you've learnt to relate to men."

Said **Indu**, "It is pathetic to watch a 30-year-old woman who has been asked out on a date giggling like a schoolgirl who has been asked out for the first time. Some girls never let themselves go. They become so conditioned by society's repressive mores and the obsession with virginity — hence the hysteria.

"On the other hand you find 'sexually literate,' urban collegiates, who have overcome their hang ups, carrying contraceptives with them. They're better adjusted individuals. The 30-year-old who is unable to venture out on her own is going to end up frustrated one day."

As **Deepa** put it: "I'd say a girl is missing a helluva lot if she doesn't **feel** for a man."

SEX IN ART AND LITERATURE

Continued from page 57

literature in the various parts of our country is a study that has yet to be undertaken. Such a study will be possible only when more work is done by Indian writers and a greater impact of their work on the reading public is established.

In judging the value of a specific work of literature or any other art form, our criterion is not merely the successful manner in which the writer or artist has been able to express his idea. It is more important to assess the extent to which the writer or the artist has been sincere to his form of expression.

If writers and artists, whether in India or in the West, are to do serious work, then they must be permitted to express themselves spontaneously. Whenever art has been inhibited its development has been stultified. Hence it is a necessary corollary that any degree of censorship is detrimental to the growth of literature and the various art forms.

Every art form is bound by a set of aesthetic principles. Censorship, on the other hand, involves a system of ethical principles. From the ethical point of view presentation of violence in any degree may be wrong. But expression of violence in a particular work of literature may have an aesthetic justification.

In the contemporary period, our approach to art is not sacred but secular. Hence we seek to apply rigid codes of censorship on works of art. But as we have seen, as the social structure of a society changes from time to time, along with it the ethical and cultural values also undergo a change. Writers whose works were banned as pornographic are today hailed as great writers, as in the case of James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence. Paintings of great masters such as Van Gogh and Picasso were ridiculed before they were accepted as works of art.

This factor of change in our sphere of values must be accepted. In the absence of any absolute values in the sphere of ethics or aesthetics it becomes illogical to censor any form of artistic creativity. For to do so becomes an arbitrary decision on the part of the authorities.

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ACI/S/M-1/A APR'78

EMOTIONAL BLACKMAIL

"You always hurt the one you love" goes the old ditty ...but when men and women use sex as a weapon to hurt, one wonders 'where love has gone'

Bindu Chowdhury

In most man/woman relationships there is a degree of sexual violence, so subtle that one does not recognize the violence at all. The act of sex is itself in a sense a violation which is sanctioned, enjoyed and sought, but nevertheless present. And nothing can change the fact that in sex it is the woman who is violated, which is perhaps the root factor that governs every nag and mother-in-law to make herself as obnoxious as possible. It also becomes the perfect lever in the hands of the wife to strike bargains or a weapon of torture to retaliate with. It is, of course, only in desperate cases that it becomes an overt gesture of total rejection.

Whether or not a woman has logically thought about it, she knows instinctively that men are insecure, vain and dependant. Her passivity will give him the basic security he needs to keep his ego fed, her "helplessness" will only enhance his virility and her total dependence will feed his image of himself as Tarzan or Napolean or whatever it is he fantasizes himself to be.

The media is replete with the projection of the growling, savage man and the submissive will-take-anything (if-you-take-me) woman. Sadism sells and, mind you, to make sadism succeed, women have to be masochistic to alarming degrees. So let's not blame the men alone. "So what, my dear if he bullies me or disregards my needs as a person? After all, he's the man in the house, you know, the Boss." Or, "One has to keep the peace, so I let him have his way." We have all known the martyred wife, carrying a chip of self pity as large as the Rock of Gibraltar on her delicate shoulders. She submits, she serves, she never swerves from her devotion and total sense of duty. It is ironical that statistics prove such wives to far outlive their notorious husbands, her tight-lipped service carrying on with being the disapproving mother-in-law and the stern grandparent.

The irony lies in the fact that her martyrdom, no matter how silent, only hastened the end of her possibly errant husband. It takes violence to a fine point of perfection; we may, if we so wish to call such a case, the perfect murder. Let us however remember that the opposite also stands equally true. I have personally known cases of spirited, bright women killed prematurely by the self-elected martyrs they married.

It is more than probable that the entire problem lies in our inherent affliction of being easily persuaded by a sense of guilt. It is drilled into us from birth, this concept of right and wrong, the proper and the improper; we are allowed definite territories of behaviour and any attempt to step out is punished in some form or the other. Freedom is only a relative term and only a madman is free today, because freedom too has been successfully trapped by progress. The operative words are cooperation, harmony, and democracy. When we fail to toe the defined lines, we are overcome by guilt. The guilt only prods us into retaliation.

But let us inspect that most important facet of man — his social "instinct" (or so we are told is the basic nature of man — remember, no man is an island?). And, to make it more interesting, let us assume this social instinct between the two sexes—a man and a woman. Down the ages, poets have poured voluminous tears over this most sublime of relationships. We have cried over it, laughed over it, died for it, lived for it and today, the media of advertising would be bereft without it. Religions have delicately skirted round it, resoundingly expounded it, seriously advocated it or fearfully banned it — but whatever, it has succeeded in holding the imagination of the human race longer than anything else. Which bring us back to the man and the woman.

We may very safely classify our man and woman within the broad socio/economic classifications that the government grants us — upper, middle, lower-middle and low. And even among these categories it is not far from accurate to classify the relationship as natural or artificial. The natural relationship is the difficult one, perhaps because it is so simple. The other is easier because no matter how complicated, it is almost universal.

It is the relationship of the second category that the world subsists on. The first is so rare that it falls in the realms of the abnormal, the primitive or the bizarre. strongest in the Western world and because of the British rule in India it has left its indelible impression among us too. No matter how vehemently we may quarrel with the issue, the concept of romance (Western-style) rules our attitudes towards the opposite sex.

We are fed from childhood with the story of Cinderella and her Prince Charming, the ideal of the "tall, dark and handsome" beau, and on the other hand, we also digest stories of Sita and Parvati. It is almost like a preparation for the ultimate examination with life of a woman. Reality itself intrudes in the form of the man who suddenly takes over, crowding into the woman's life with his demands, his needs, his own conditioning and his image of the ideal woman. The two images meet. The initial euphoria of romance fortunately buffers the shock of reality. Sex is a tentative exploration, the imagination supplies the necessary starlight and heavenly music which are said to accompany it.

It reveals itself in so many small manners. With familiarity, it is only the truly mature, balanced person who does not succumb to pettiness. The years of repressed violence ("don't hit him, he's younger" or "don't hit your sister, she's a girl") find the perfect victim in the person who is constantly with you. The person you are now sharing your most intimate moment with is a stranger, it is easier to hurt such a person. Between the man and woman who share a bed, little is hidden. Weaknesses that you may yourself be unaware of are revealed to the other. The knowledge is always a secret weapon unerringly used to attack or defend. The weaker of the two will invariably be more hurtful. There is a morbid pleasure derived from watching a truth hit the mark. If you have been hurt yourself, you will want to hit back and make sure you don't miss. It is a revenge not against the **other** alone, but against all your conditioning. There is an inevitability and a justification in this hurting which is granted and accepted as an inalienable aspect of "love". Who hasn't justified this violence with the saying "it is those whom we love most that we hurt"?

Why do we hurt those whom we profess to love? Is it at all possible that we do not "love" to begin with? That in fact, the man/woman relationship is merely a pact of convenience, sanctified by words like love and respect when in reality it is merely a series of careful bargains. The partner who gets the shorter end of the stick will invariably strike out. These bargains may not be tangible at all but you see it in the woman who "expected" her man to be well-groomed, witty and affectionate or in the man who "expects" his woman to be "patient," "admiring" and "warm". We bargain, we gamble, we never cease to hope that the images we have created will eventually merge into the reality.

In the meanwhile, we continue to indulge in emotional blackmail. We shuttle between our essential aloneness and our fear of loneliness. Critical and subtle bargains are struck between the two parties to keep essential needs fulfilled and civilisation goes on.

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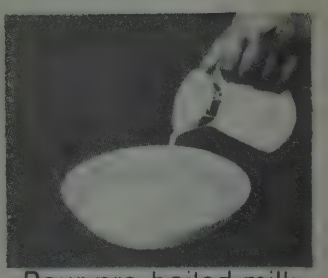
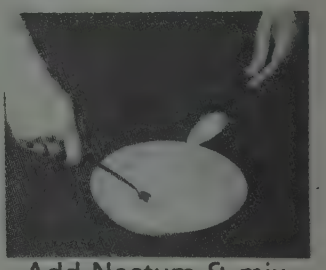
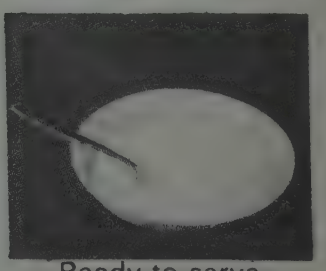


Pour pre-boiled milk



Add Nestum & mix



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NBC/CAS—2/78

THE DEBASEMENT OF SEX

A.S.

The hypocrisy of our society is evident in its politics and its social and economic values. But nowhere is it more glaring and its effects more grotesque than in the realm of sex — the male and female sex and the act of sex itself. The funniest jokes, they say, are sex jokes, the worst abuses are sexual and a favourite pastime of many boys and men is eve-teasing. Sex has become a convenient scapegoat on which society heaps all its own inadequacies.

Take jokes to start with. One has only to go through the pages of a "bold" magazine in order to see the sexual insinuations that are expected to raise a laugh — "these advertising guys are so smooth their beds don't have time to get cold," or "Mother, Mr. Blotz said we don't have to pay cash if we use his Layaway Plan", or "You've guessed right! I'm a hot potato and I welcome Mashers", and "Has Bardot retired? She used to drive men Rigid."

Sexual abuses, sexist jokes and Eve-teasing denote a contempt of women—a desire to hurt, humiliate and degrade them

"She says she has experience of direct selling."

Another common theme with many variations to be found is, men panting after what they imagine is a beautiful sexy girl, only to find an ugly woman.

Women exist in this world for only one purpose—to jump into bed with the first man who asks them. The only asset a woman has is her figure and face. The only relationship that can exist between a man and a woman is sexual, and if it isn't then something is wrong with either of them

"Since when does the auditor have to examine my private holdings?"

or both. In all these jokes, women are sexy looking nymphomaniacs, dumb innocents or ugly unfortunates and men have minds of fourteen-year-old adolescents.

This cult of jokes has debased sex to a degree never witnessed before in history. Women and men have become automatons — sex machines. Sex itself has been reduced to mechanical motions. The appearance of a female figure automatically switches the machine on, and the joke follows. The fact that people are human beings, that the sexual act is not animal passion, but the closest personal bond between two people, has been buried deep beneath these myths created in society. The logical outcome of these attitudes which have been fostered is, of course, eve-teasing and abuse.

The lewd comments that men pass at women, the stares, pokes and pinches stem from the attitude that woman is a sex machine. But yet they loathe the very women they make a pass at. Every man knows that he does not want a robot. He wants a vibrant, living person. Society denies him the right to get to the person, so he has to settle for the machine.

Worse, of course, are abuses. The strongest abuses one can heap on another person are derogatory references to either the sexual organs, especially female, or sexual relationships or the sex act itself. This holds for abuses not only in English, but in most other languages as well. Why have natural parts of our body, no different from our hands or eyes or noses, become the target for such debasement? Why is the sexual act treated with so much contempt?

Not only in Indian society, but in almost every civilised society in the world we find this state of affairs. They are largely, though not exclusively, a violence against women. For they show a tremendous contempt for women, a desire to hurt them, degrade and humiliate them. Worse, these jokes and abuses are a violence against tender human relationships. They have twisted and mauled contact between people as human beings. For they create expectations which are not only unattainable but also inhuman, so that our personalities get warped. They have made natural, healthy relationships between men and women almost impossible.

Abuses and eve-teasing reflect the disgust that men feel towards women. This disgust is a result of the hypocrisy of our society towards sex. The desire for sex, the attraction towards a person of the opposite sex are natural. But social norms curb these natural desires. They are considered filthy and can be indulged in only secretively. Therefore the guilt associated with furtive, squalid sexual release is transferred onto women and onto the sexual act itself. A human act becomes its opposite, a dirty yet necessary mechanical act. It gives little pleasure except for physical release and arouses only loathing and disgust.

But hypocritical sexual values are not the only reason for this debasement. The roots lie much deeper, in the very structure of society today. Society is divided in almost every country in the world by wealth and poverty, racism, casteism and sexism. People are trained from birth to utilize people to further their own ends. People are taught to distrust and to manipulate — to get profits to get security, to get to the top. In such a case people are rarely able to establish personal ties based on trust and understanding. The frustration emerging from this inability to enter into deep relationships is tremendous. The alienation is sought to be resolved through sex, thereby destroying its human aspect.

How can an end be found to this distortion and debasement of human relationships? It is for us to recognize that a dominant media is reinforcing this. For as long as advertisements emphasize sex, the seductiveness of women, the virility of the strong male, the myth of people being sex machines is perpetuated. As long as women remain inferior socially they will remain objects of ridicule and contempt. Such distortions and myths can be broken only if men and women fight together against the poverty, exploitation, greed and selfishness — the root causes of human alienation. Only in the process of such a struggle can genuine social bonds be reestablished.

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THE ODIUM OF INCEST

K. S. Rao

Incest is probably the ugliest word in the English language. It suggests a disgusting depravity, a degradation, that no other crime evokes in our minds. Yet there is no uniform definition of the crime. For example, what is incest in England, punishable with a jail sentence under the Sexual Offence Act — sex between a man and his sister's daughter— is perfectly legal in South India where marriage between them is a common occurrence. Actually, in India incest is not a crime **per se** unless it attracts the provisions of the Indian Penal Code under sections 376 and 497.

Not only do laws and taboos differ from one country to another, the latter differ from one to region to another inside India itself. While marriages between maternal uncle and niece and between maternal cousins are sanctified by custom in the South, in the North they are prohibited as incestuous. And while in the Punjab marriage with a brother's widow is permitted, almost a familial duty, in the South it would be rank incest.

The taboo on incest is perhaps the most binding and ubiquitous moral constraint known to man

Incest cannot be defined even as prohibition of sex between descendants and ascendants in the male line, because marriages between first cousins in the male line are permitted in some countries.

Yet this lack of a clear and uniform definition does not make incest any the less an odious sexual aberration. As Dr. D. James Henderson says in "Sexual Experience," "The incest taboo is perhaps the most binding and ubiquitous moral constraint known to man."

Greek legends are full of incestuous relations, with Zeus himself leading. He killed his father to marry his mother and begot a progeny of lesser gods. And this did not diminish his status as the top banana in the Greek pantheon. Then, of course, there is the classic case of Oedipus and his mother.

In ancient Egypt the pharoahs married their sisters. In ancient Persia, King Artaxerxes married his own daughter and sibling marriage was customary among the Incas. Then we have the Biblical story of Lot seduced by his daughters.

Curiously enough, while Indian mythology teems with stories of adultery, even that outstanding lecher, Indra, did not venture into incest. In historical times, too, there is no known case of incest among kings and nobles. But this does not mean any innate moral superiority, because today incest is as common in India as elsewhere.

Coming to modern times, incest occurs more frequently than we would like to believe. And the reported cases of incest are only a fraction of those actually occurring, as no family normally likes to incur social odium by making public incest among its members. According to Dr. Pritam Phatnani, a well-known expert, only one in 20 cases are reported. According to a recent survey, in some of Britain's slum areas incest is so common that it does not cause any comment. And in the case of father-daughter incest, according to Dr. D. J. Henderson, it begins with the eldest daughter and continues with the younger ones.

Among the more grotesque cases cited by Dr. Henderson was that of a man who had sexual intercourse with two of his three daughters and then with all his five grand-daughters, one of whom was probably born to him. Another was a household where incestual relations existed between father and daughter, mother and son and brother and sister. And he also cites a case of a very intelligent, highly educated man committing incest with his own 20-year-old son. Father and son became psychopaths.

In India incest is more furtive. Statistics show more cases of father-daughter incest than between brother and sister.

Talking of the actual cases Dr. Phatnani said that in one, a skilled worker aged between 40-45 raped his seven-year-old daughter and was sentenced to a five year jail term when his wife complained to the police.

In another case of unbelievable brutality, an 11-month old baby was raped by her drunken uncle in whose care its mother had left it to go to the market. The baby was not only physically bruised but it was also infected with gonorrhoea. During his five-year tenure with legal medicine, Dr. Phatnani said, he came across two cases which he investigated for medical proof of incestuous rape. Proof, he said, becomes difficult with the passage of time. So, he said, of the few cases reported to the police, even fewer result in conviction because of the time gap between the crime and the medical examination.

He found that many of those who commit incest are not psychopaths. Most of them, he says, seem to be ordinary, normal people. Yet they are men of weak character and mentally underdeveloped girls. What leads even some normal people to commit such a universally condemned crime like incest? According to him, it is usually motivated by the urge for sex and the lack of opportunities for it outside the home because of economic or social reasons. In the case of a father or grand-father it is the desire for a younger woman. Among the poor in slum areas, constantly sleeping close to a daughter or a sister is an additional temptation. Alcohol, and now drugs, are also common causative factors.

Is the universal taboo on incest then based on only moral grounds like the taboo against any other form of adultery, or are there scientific reasons for it? Is incest a degenerative human tendency? It is difficult to generalise because even today there are primitive tribes in the remote areas of Indonesia, Borneo and Africa which practise all types of incest without any inhibitions. But then no attempt seems to have been made to find out the genetic harm done to them. So, there is no reason to doubt that there are sound genetic reasons for the taboo. According to Dr. Henderson, the issue of incestuous parents show the genetic flaws of inbreeding. This is perhaps the basis for the Hindu taboo against marriage between families of the same gotra.

Unfortunately, the separation of sexual pleasure from reproduction has encouraged the increase of incest, especially among the educated, because today one can have sex without fear of progeny. But it is not the danger of flawed children alone that makes incest a sexual offence. In many cases both the men and women involved in incest suffer psychological damage and so, the taboo against incest is not merely a moral constraint based on sentiment but is socially it could be. Few normal peop[illegible]

Even though the incidence of incest is more than we hear about, still it is so much less than it could be. Few normal people indulge in incest as a means of sexual gratification. Only the mentally flawed commit it.

SEX IN ART AND LITERATURE

Writers and artists must be permitted to express themselves spontaneously, if they are to make headway in their fields, says NISSIM EZEKIEL, critic of art and literature, in an interview with S. S.

All art forms emerge from the cultural values of the people within a society. As the socio-economic and geographical conditions vary from society to society, so do their cultural values. These changes are reflected in the art of every society.

For instance, sex was very explicit in Roman art, though not in the art forms of the Greek. The Greek ethos did not permit such frankness because they had the concept of the obscene. Once we begin to differentiate between the various expressions of sex as being good or bad, the expression becomes limited. Spontaniety is lost, and the art forms then become more formalised, and inhibited in their content.

If we evaluate the various art and literary forms of ancient and medieval India, we find them to be unrepressed expressions of human emotions and experiences. In spite of the severe religious codes accepted by the Hindus, their concept of morality had a wide connotation, especially in the field of art and literature.

In Sanskrit literature for instance, many of the plots are built around the illicit sexual relations between a man and a woman. Such relations were not berated, but were granted divine sanction. The erotic sentiment was given the first place in Sanskrit literature, and the tendency of almost all poets was to describe the delicate secrets of conjugal love in vivid and colourful details.

The same may be said of the various other art forms of this period. Mithuna, the state of being a couple, was given shape on the walls of temples as a symbol of the union of **purusa** and **Prakrati**, of Essence and Substance. The entire science and art of love-making have gone into the form of these infinitely varied symbols of the moment of union.

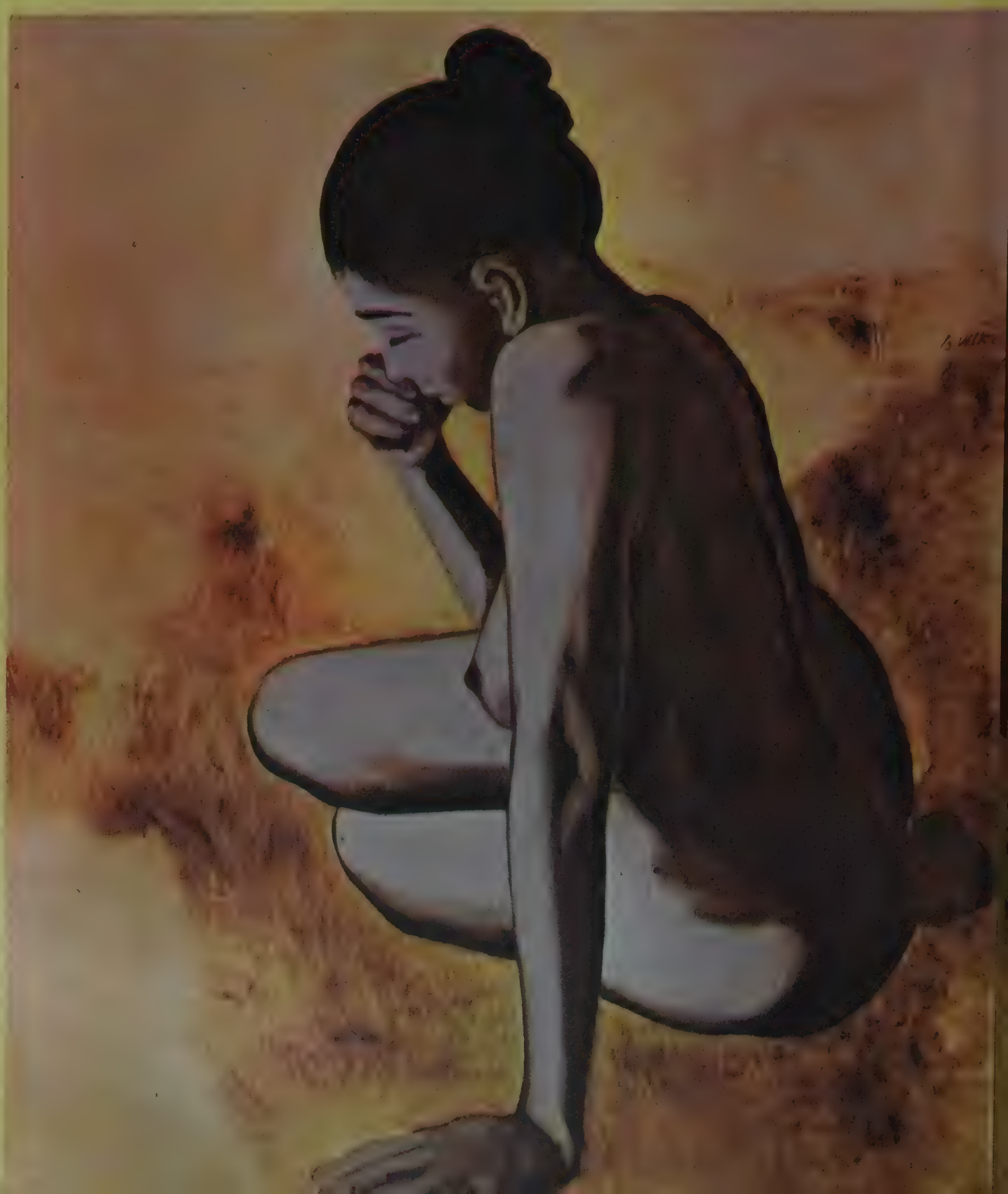
As regards violence, the literary forms describe the various wars between the **devas** and the **danavas** or **asuras**. The climax in both the great epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata, is built around the war between Rama and Ravana, and the Pandavas and the Kauravas respectively. The sculptures also portray the various wars between the Gods and the **asuras**. But all these expressions of violence reveal the conflict between good and evil, and as the gods themselves participate in them, become a part of the divine play.

In later centuries both in the West and in India, expressions of art and literature became highly inhibited, owing to the predominance of the concepts of obscenity and vulgarity.

The turn of the 20th century has once again brought into the fore the freedom of the artistes, in all forms. In Western literature, sex and violence are explicitly revealed as are the poetic images around which many of the literary forms are evolved.

Contemporary authors and poets of India too have begun to be more spontaneous in their creations. In India, however, sex rather than violence is more of a vital theme in literature. In fact the most important medium for violence has been so far the commercial film in the different Indian languages.

Of the other art forms the most significant is modern painting. Here, there are a few artists who use sex as their central theme, but there has not as yet been a sufficiently widespread influence of the concept of sex. As regards violence, it has seldom been expressed in painting, as the medium is not suited for its expression.



Sex was granted divine sanction. Painting by B. Prabha

In earlier times, the concepts of obscenity inhibited art.

Painting by Shamshad

As regards the various schools of music and the dances of India, they are still presented in their traditional forms. No significant school of modern music or dance has as yet made an impact on our society. The traditional forms of dance are highly formalised and therefore fail to evoke lively emotions from a mass audience.

The main difference between the expression of sex and violence in traditional art and modern art is the difference in the attitudes of both the artists and the public. In the past, all art and literature in India had divine sanction and for that reason, the people also accepted them. Today the artist presents sex or violence for its own sake, as a piece of his creation. The layman and the expert too, each views the creation and evaluates it from his own point of view.

To the common man, sex in literature may have a pornographic value, but the man of letters may find it to be of genuine literary value and therefore accept it. Just as there is a difference between the different sections of the viewing and/or reading public, there is also a marked difference between various writers and artists, the difference between exploration and exploitation. A writer may analyse a situation, and sex or violence may be presented as an aesthetic necessity. Several poets, playwrights and novelists who are seriously committed to their work present any facet of life which is essential to their theme. Vijay Tendulkar, for instance, has used both sex and violence as the basic factors around which his play **Gidhade** is woven. There is a justification for this, as the plot of the play demands both the factors. Tendulkar is doing research work on violence in society and if his plays are centred around the factor of violence, it is an outcome of his study which explores certain experiences within our society.

Vijay Tendulkar uses sexual violence as a basic motif in many of his plays . . . . scene from "Sakharam Binder."

On the other hand there are writers and artists who use sex and violence in their work merely as a means of exploiting them. A nude painting may bring a new artist a great deal of attention. A sexual act described in a novel may increase the sale of the book. Such exploitation of the factors of sex and violence does exist in the literary field of all our regional languages. How far sex or violence is being used in the legitimate interests of art or

Continued on page 49

Expression of sex and violence in traditional art differed much from the modern view.

Painting by Ara

Photographs: Farokh Reporter

Sheila Singh
Sector 21
Chandigarh.

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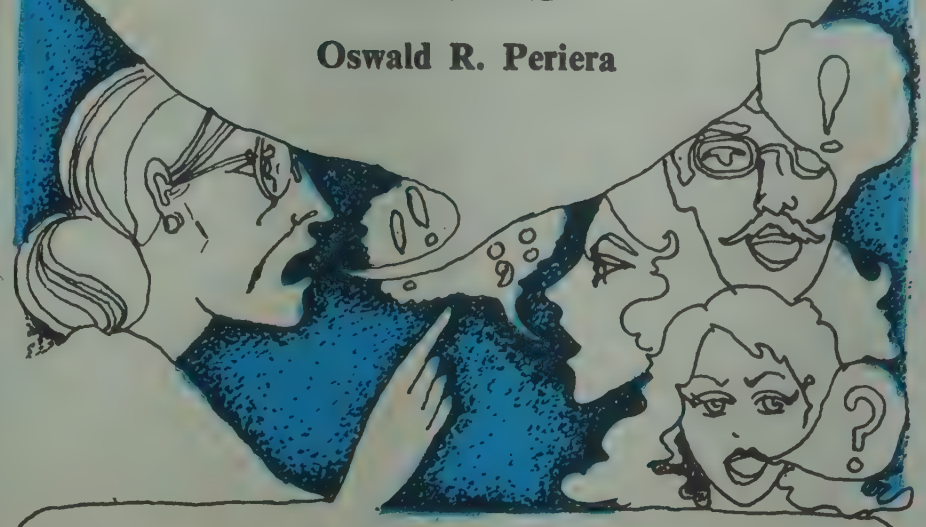
PERMISSIVENESS

"A WORD USED BY MIDDLE-CLASS FOGIES"

Oswald R. Periera



Living together, sex before marriage, swinging orgies —all have "arrived" here ostensibly from the West. What do our citizens think of the new, permissive breed? We present here a dialogue with the old and the young.

The word "permissive" is among the most loosely used words in India. A person just has to be broad-minded and have liberal ideas for the tag of permissiveness to be attached to him or her with no real understanding of the word or what it connotes. Opinion is divided among the young and old, and among the middle and the rich classes, about the very concept of permissiveness and what it really entails.

Take the case of Miss **A.S.** and Mr. **B.M.** Six months ago, **A.S.** decided to leave her parents and live with the man she loved in his flat at Peddar Road. She is a young model in her early twenties. He is a businessman, forty, but youthful and a divorcee. **A.S.** wants independence as well as security (which she says her parents denied her.) They grudged her her modelling career and nagged her about her 'affairs.' **A.S.** wants to cling to her independence. "If we get married, it will be by mutual consent and not only because he wants a wife. I'm sure he is in no hurry to get married, since his first marriage was on the rocks only a year ago."

A.S. and **B.M.** were visibly upset when I suggested that the average middle class person would consider their "arrangement" permissive. **B.M.** maintained his cool but **A.S.** said angrily: "Let the middle class rest on their laurels — their false sense of values, their fetishistic beliefs about purity and virginity. I don't see any harm in dressing 'provocatively' — that is the word they would love to use — or in having sex before marriage."

But when I asked a middle-class young unmarried woman, who is in love with a bank clerk, whether she would live with her man before marriage, should the need ever arise, she looked horrified and said categorically; "Never! What would my parents and society think of me? I know I sound old fashioned. But I wouldn't even in the wildest of dreams, think of joining the brave new permissive breed who are corrupting sublime love by placing too much emphasis on sex. Today a modern boy likes a girl not because of her character but the way she talks and flirts with him. Men today do not even want a pretty face, a 'sexy' face is enough; they do not want a wife with mental and spiritual assets, physical assets are sufficient to satisfy their lust. These are signs of a sick, permissive society."

An exasperated housewife said: "The whole structure of society will crumble down if permissiveness becomes a cult here as in the West. What would happen to my children if I went out with other men?"

However, a young bachelor friend of mine, who works for a travel agency, said: "It's all sham, man. A woman who wraps herself in yards of sari can be as permissive as a woman wearing a halter. It's all a question of opportunity — give the sari-clad woman a chance and the necessary surroundings and she'll beat your so-called liberated and permissive woman in this game of sex. Sex is an instinct, a basic need and one does not become permissive if he/she gives in to it when the frenzy is high.

"If I get married," he continued, "I would not be able to say for sure whether I'd be faithful to my wife. Especially when she grows old and fails to attract me sexually, I'll seek the company of other women. You'll admit that's practical. And please don't dub this as permissiveness."

"Would you allow your wife to flirt with other men?"

"I suppose ... yes," he hesitated.

"Wouldn't all this have an adverse effect on the minds of your children?"

"No, my children would never know. Things could be done with the utmost secrecy. If we are not satisfied with each other I don't see why we should still claw at one another."

The liberal view expressed by many among the "elite" especially the young nowadays is: "When two adults go to bed in full faith and with mutual consent, there is nothing wrong in it, provided no one else is harmed, and the necessary precautions are taken." However, it must be admitted the harm done to other's is difficult to calculate in absolute or real terms.

Permissiveness in the upper brackets of society is setting a bad example to raw young minds, but films have a greater potential to distort the young adolescent's sense of values, said an irate parent. "The cleavages, sex and violence shown on the silver screen is a great booster to permissiveness. The celluloid images seem larger than life and truer to one's fantasies and subconscious dreams. They (mis) mould the immature mind.

"Permissiveness has gone so far today that a father would not hesitate to talk filth before his children," continued the parent. "I know of at least two fathers who narrate dirty jokes, pass snide remarks about women, in front of the children and the wife. The wife laughs and the children giggle. And they call all this modernity and broadmindedness!"

"I'm not permissive," said **R.S.**, a vivacious young collegian, when I mentioned the purpose of the interview. "Yes, I'm going steady with a nice, decent boy. I take time off from my studies and we go out, don't ask me where. Believe me, it's great relaxation, the date I mean. He respects me. I know how and when to stop him. He dare not force anything upon me. I can take care of myself.

"Permissiveness is a word used by middle class fogies. I wonder if you're one of them," **R.S.** said.

However, **S.P.** who goes to a suburban college, calls the "hep crowd" of Bombay's elite colleges the "dregs of society." She minces no words when she brands them "permissive upto the hilt."

"Many of our tribals are permissive and even promiscuous," I told **S.P.**

She said: "The permissiveness and promiscuity of our tribals is simple and honest; they do not know that it is wrong to be so. Our modern youth should know that for a civilised society, permissiveness spells disorder and chaos. Tribals do things out in the open. City dwellers do things sneakily." They wouldn't, if society didn't force them to, I thought.

"I still wouldn't call our modern youth permissive," I said.

"I'll tell you," she condescended. "Their parents are filthy rich. They are permissive. Their children follow suit. But why should these rich students set a bad example to poor students by their bold dress and shameful manners?"

"Indians have always been obsessed with sex. Our religious mythology is replete with stories of love and orgies. Phallic symbols are worshipped upto this day," said **K.R.**, a chartered accountant in his late thirties. "See our caves and temples. Sex is shown as something sublime on those walls. Permissiveness is nothing new to India. It was always here."

A young "modern" poet, **C.S.**, said: "Permissiveness is a cycle. 'Permissiveness' of the modern age is a mere transitional stage — from where man will evolve to a higher sort of being, more ideal than the beginning."

Rev. **B.N.** a young Catholic priest, said that "No man or woman is an angel. Permissiveness is part of the primitive instincts that are present in every person. Man has been given a free will and intelligence. But his intelligence is incomplete, his free will subject to restrictions. Man is not perfect. He cannot be only good. That is the paradox of an incomplete intelligence, the tragicomedy aspect of man. Permissiveness, then is ingrained in man, and is a part of the tragicomedy aspect of the human personality."

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TRANSEXUALISM

A DESPERATE SEARCH FOR A NEW IDENTITY

Sex change operations are not 'news' anymore. The psychological problems, however, are manifold and the plastic surgeon is both psychiatrist and magician

Indra Gidwani

A major controversy was sparked off in the United States when Dr Renee Richards (42), a doctor and tennis player, who became a woman after undergoing a surgical operation, wanted to participate as a woman in an open tennis competition.

Before the sex-change operation, Dr. Richards was Dr. Richard Raskin — a man — and was ranked 13th nationally in 1975 in the men's 35 and over division. She said, "I have the same right to play in the tournament as any other woman. I am a woman, physically and medically. I prepared for five years for the operation." Once the New York State Supreme Court pronounced the verdict in her favour, the American Tennis Association ruled that Renee Richards could enter the United States open championships at Forest Hills as a woman.

Several successful and brilliant people have undergone sex-change operations. About 300 people in the United States have been "sexually reassigned," as doctors call it, mainly in the last 10 years as this surgery has become widely available. At the Stanford University Medical Centre, one of the most active institutions in sexual reassignment, more than 150 people have undergone hormone therapy and plastic surgery. Sexual reassignment is currently performed at some 20 centres in 17 states of the U.S.A. One of the pioneering institutions was the John Hopkins Medical School, where sex-change surgery began in 1966. It is estimated that one person in every 400,000 is a transexual.

There are millions of people all over the world who cannot be classified as true males or true females. Some are born with defective genitals or dubious genitals like the hermaphrodites. Then there are the transexuals who have complete genitals of either sex but they have the mind of one sex imprisoned in the body of the other. This tragic mismatch can produce a state of misery that drives such people to drastic action; sex-change through surgery and a reversal of life-styles. For them it's a long and lonely journey across the border of sex but they cannot rest till they make the trip.

Transexualism, a word coined by Dr. Harry Benjamin, an American endocrinologist and sexologist, in 1954, is a psychosexual disorder. The phenomenon of transexualism is not new; only the emphasis is recent. The earliest description of transexuality is found in the designation of the goddess Venus Castina—the goddess who responded with sympathy and understanding to the deep desires of feminine souls locked up in male bodies.

The first most complete sex transformation in medical history was that of Christine Jorgensen of New York in 1953. A G. I., George Jorgensen was a transexual, whose only regret was the sensation her case had caused. The change of gender was accomplished in two years.

An unending stream of transexual cases pour into Bombay every year from all over India and even abroad. Bombay is the only place in India where this type of operation is being performed on a definite "psychiatric basis." Dr. M. H. Keswani, a well-known plastic surgeon who performed the first complete sex-change operation in Bombay in 1971, says he receives many letters every day, desperately seeking help to change sex. He has performed 11 operations of this kind so far.

The first operation was on a Jabalpur boy. He was highly educated and his parents tried all sorts of treatment to set him right before finally bringing him to Bombay. The boy is now an attractive girl. "She" lives in Bombay and is happily married to a boy with whom "she" fell in love.

On May 13, 1975, a 25-year-old woman in Bombay was transformed into a man. A six-hour operation by Dr. Keswani did the trick: Dr. Pragati Munagekar became Dr. Prasanna Munagekar.

"Ever since I was a child I wanted to be what I am today — a man. I hated myself for belonging to the female sex. Day in and day out I used to pray to the Almighty and Satya Sai Baba to make me a man. Once, along with other women doctors, I went for a **darshan** of Satya Sai Baba, I was wearing a sari. He took one look at me and asked 'Are you really a lady doctor?' I said to myself I know I don't really belong to the female sex. But can't someone convince my mother? Then Satya Sai Baba told me clearly that I would have to go in the reverse direction but it would take time," said Dr. Prasanna.

On August 5, 1976, a popular and record-breaking sprinter of Kerala, Miss Nani Radha, went in for a sex-change. "She" is now Mr. Radhakrishnan.

Another recent case in Bombay is that of a male concert pianist who changed into a female. He says, "By the time I was 25, I had reconciled myself to the idea of being a woman trapped inside a male body. It was a prison from which I believed only death could release me. But then came a magician — a famous plastic surgeon — who told me that I did not have to wait for my next incarnation; that it was possible to change my sex right now and it would take only a few hours in the operating theatre."

Why should anyone want to change his or her "sex" and what is "sex"? To the man in the street the question of an individual's sex is as simple as it is crude: "Does the man have testicles or not?" The medical profession, however, has to be more sophisticated about it.

The medical definition of sex is not so simple. First there is **genetic** or **chromosomal sex.** In the nucleus of every living cell, there are usually two chromosomes which determine sex. At conception these chromosomes constitute the very first indication of a person's sex.

Then there is **gonodal sex** The chromosomes control the development of the gonads, which are the internal sex factories manufacturing the ovaries in the female and the testes in the male.

We then have **phenotypic sex** in which the "sex factories" normally determine the visible apparatus of gender — the genitals.

Finally there is **behavioural** sex or the grey area of psychological sex — what individuals believe themselves to be.

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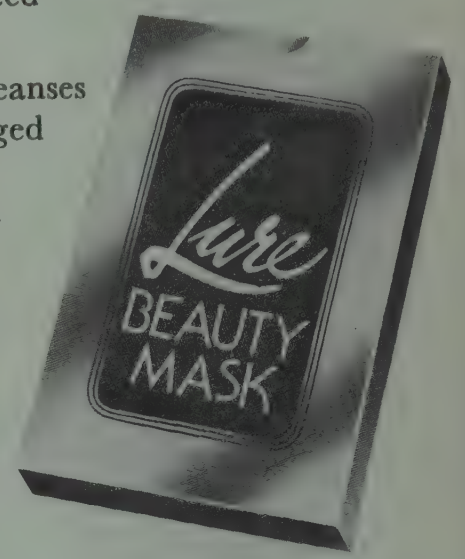

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culty in determining a person's sex. The trouble is they don't always. It is, for example, possible for a person to have perfectly normal male chromosomes and perfectly normal testes but female genital organs; and it is possible to have female chromosomes and normal ovaries but male external genitals.

As a result, we have the transexuals, the transvestites, the genuine and the pseudo-hermaphrodites and homosexuals.

Only the transexuals and the hermaphrodites can be treated surgically. Whilst the surgery on the transexual is the true case of sex change the operation on a hermaphrodite is only a sex correction.

Whatever the psychological motivation, the desire to change to the other sex is so overwhelming that the transexuals turn to surgery to accomplish this end. Unfortunately for them, surgery is limited in what it can do. It cannot change a person's chromosomal structure, nor can it alter the internal reproductive organs, although it can take them out altogether. The only part of the body that can be changed in the sex-change operations is the genitals.

The men and women who undergo such operations are not able to reproduce. Their only satisfaction is to belong to the

TRANSEXUALISM

sex they mentally desire so strongly.

The psychological problem is very much a part of the transexual's dilemma. It is beautifully described in Jan Morris's best-seller "Conundrum".

Transexualism, Morris explains, is not an act of sex at all, it's not a sexual mode or preference. What this urge actually is and what its causes are, are not clear to anybody yet. Even after he became a woman and ultimately felt at home in the new body, the phenomenon of transexualism continued to be a dilemma — "A dilemma neither of the body nor of the brain but of the spirit." He writes "that my conundrum might simply be a matter of penis or vagina, testicle or womb, seems to me still a contradiction in terms for it concerned not my apparatus but myself."

Morris did not allow his transexual dilemma to drive him mad. He did not also try to artificially curb his urge to be a woman. He came to terms with his own urges and confused desires with understanding and courage. Convinced from early childhood that he was of feminine gender, he ultimately succeeded in getting a body to suit his real nature.

"Conundrum" is thus a book born out of the confusion and enigma of a man who became determined to pursue the feminine in him to its logical conclusion, which was no less than a total change of sex brought about after eight years of consistent hormone treatment followed by three sessions of surgery. These eight years were preceded by a childhood, adolescence and manhood during which James Morris lived the life of a female in a male body.

James Morris, who became a well-known journalist, worked as an overseas correspondent for "The Time", "The Guardian" and the Arab News Agency in Cairo. He wrote eight books, most of them travelogues. His last book "Conundrum", published in 1974, was written after he became Jan Morris.

When James became Jan, he decided to live with his wife Elizabeth as Miss Morris. The marriage between James and Elizabeth was remarkable, a marriage one might say that was personally a happy one for the family, but also one whose happiness was diluted by the unique tragedy of his personal dilemma.

Jan's contention is that the genital organs make a difference to the character of a person. For Jan "there was to the presence of the penis something positive and stimulating. My body then was made to push and initiate, it is made now to yield and accept, and the outside change has had its inner consequence."

Dr. Narendra Pandya, a top plastic surgeon of Bombay, has performed a number of sex-change operations since 1968 both in U.S.A. and in India.

Dr. Pandya says, "The right assessment of the patient is very important as it is an operation where you reach a point of no return. If a person is a psychotic, he needs psychiatric help and surgery is out. Only in the case of a transexual can surgery be performed."

Dr. Pandya's is a one-stage technique of operation and it lasts for two and a half hours. This is how he performs the male to female operation: Female hormones are given for a prolonged period to suppress the male characteristics and encourage the

Continued on page 67

TRANSVESTITES

It is a popular misconception that transvestites are effeminate, impotent and homosexual

Unlike the transexuals the transvestites content themselves with merely dressing up as members of the opposite sex. Some of them wear male or female undergarments to satisfy this urge. "Homosexuality and transexualism represent incongruities of gender identity. Transvestism is similarly incongruous, but only episodically, during the period of cross-dressing. There is also an element of fetishism in male transvestism, in so far as the transvestite's penis is impotent and non-ejaculatory, if denied the fetishistic stimulus of female attire. Dependence of orgasm on the fetish object occurs, to all intents and purposes, exclusively in males and not in females. . ." (Man and Woman, Boy and Girl by Money & Ehrhardt).

Vijayakumar, a male transvestite from Hyderabad whom we met recently, said, "When I dress like a woman, I become more manly and sexually potent."

He said, "There's a popular misconception that transvestites are effeminate, impotent and homosexual. This is totally baseless. They are as a rule heterosexual and potent. Most of them live happy married lives but sometimes their wives dislike their deviation and do not co-operate with their husbands."

This is how he became a transvestite: "At the age of 11 when I played the role of a girl in a school drama, I derived immense pleasure. Then I started locking myself in a room and dressing as a girl After marriage, my wife disliked my transvestism but now she co-operates with me. She allows me to wear feminine attire when making love to her. I like women's clothes, ornaments, make-up etc. When made-up, but for my facial hair, nobody can recognise me as a male," said Vijayakumar.

Vijayakumar says he derives great pleasure from practising transvestism. He would not like to go to a psychiatrist to get it cured. Most of the transvestites are well-adjusted.

The word "transvestism" was first coined by a German sexologist, Dr. Magnus Hirschfield, in 1910. Although this condition has existed since early civilisation, it was never given an appropriate label. Professor Hirschfield started an Institute of Sexual Science in Berlin which was destroyed rather early during the Nazi rule in 1933. The reason, it is claimed, was that the Institute contained confidential data on the sexual habits of many of the prominent Nazi leaders.

Physically the transvestite has normal genitalia. The man knows he is male and wishes to remain so. The masquerade in which he indulges is entirely psychological.

The mingled distrust and ridicule which even the milder forms of transvestism have aroused are due to the fact that it disturbs the bisexuality in every man and woman. It brings into consciousness something which has been thrust out of sight.

Dr. Vasant Joshi, a a psychiatrist attached to the J.J. group of Hospitals, who has handled many cases of transvestism in London and Bombay says, "Very few transvestites, however, come to us for treatment and those who do, belong to the higher socio-economic group; consequently the cases reported do not represent a fair sample of transvestism."

Dr. Vasant Joshi says "There is no such thing as 100 per cent female or 100 per cent male. As Freud said 'When a man and a woman are having intercourse, it's between the four of them.'"

I. G.

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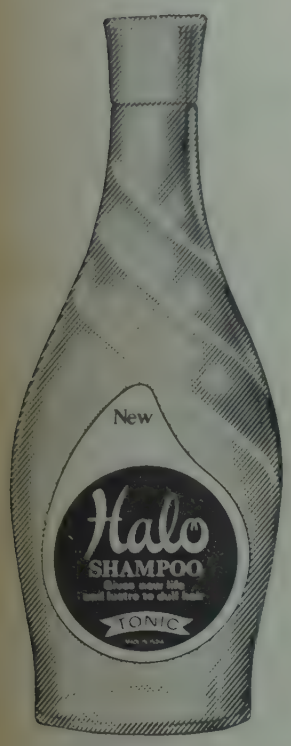

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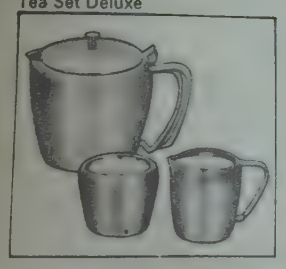

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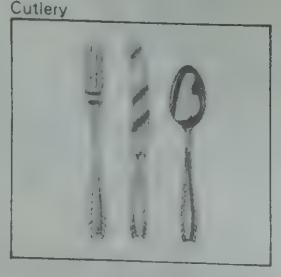

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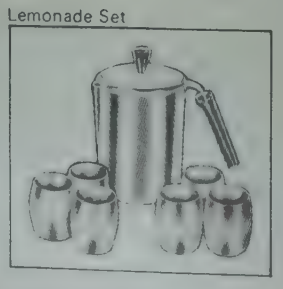

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iolence, in any form, is harm- to society. When the factor riolence is combined with the mate human relationship of destructive results follow, ermining the very persona- of the victim. The crime ga- rs greater dimensions when object of sexual violence or e is a child.

The sex urge, lack of privacy, superstition—all hese are respon- sible for sexual ssaults on children

A human being under the age twelve years is said to be a ild. From the legal point of ew, when any person under e age of sixteen is involved in sexual act, it is a case of child olestation for, even if he or e has consented to the act, it not accepted as legal consent.

The general attitude of the ban public is that rape of chil- en is a very rare phenomenon, hich occurs only in the poorer ctions of society. It is believ- l that normal, educated and vilized adults would not be pable of such criminal acts ecause of the development of eir rationality and sensitivity.

Contrary to such beliefs, child olestation is a crime prevalent qually in all strata of society. ut of every hundred cases of ape that are reported, as many s thirty would be cases of child olestation. Unfortunately, most f the crimes in this sphere are ot reported to the police, for arious reasons which we shall iscuss later. There are two de- nite fields of child molesta- ion — one within the atmosphere f the family itself, and second- y, cases of molestation totally utside the sphere of the family roup.

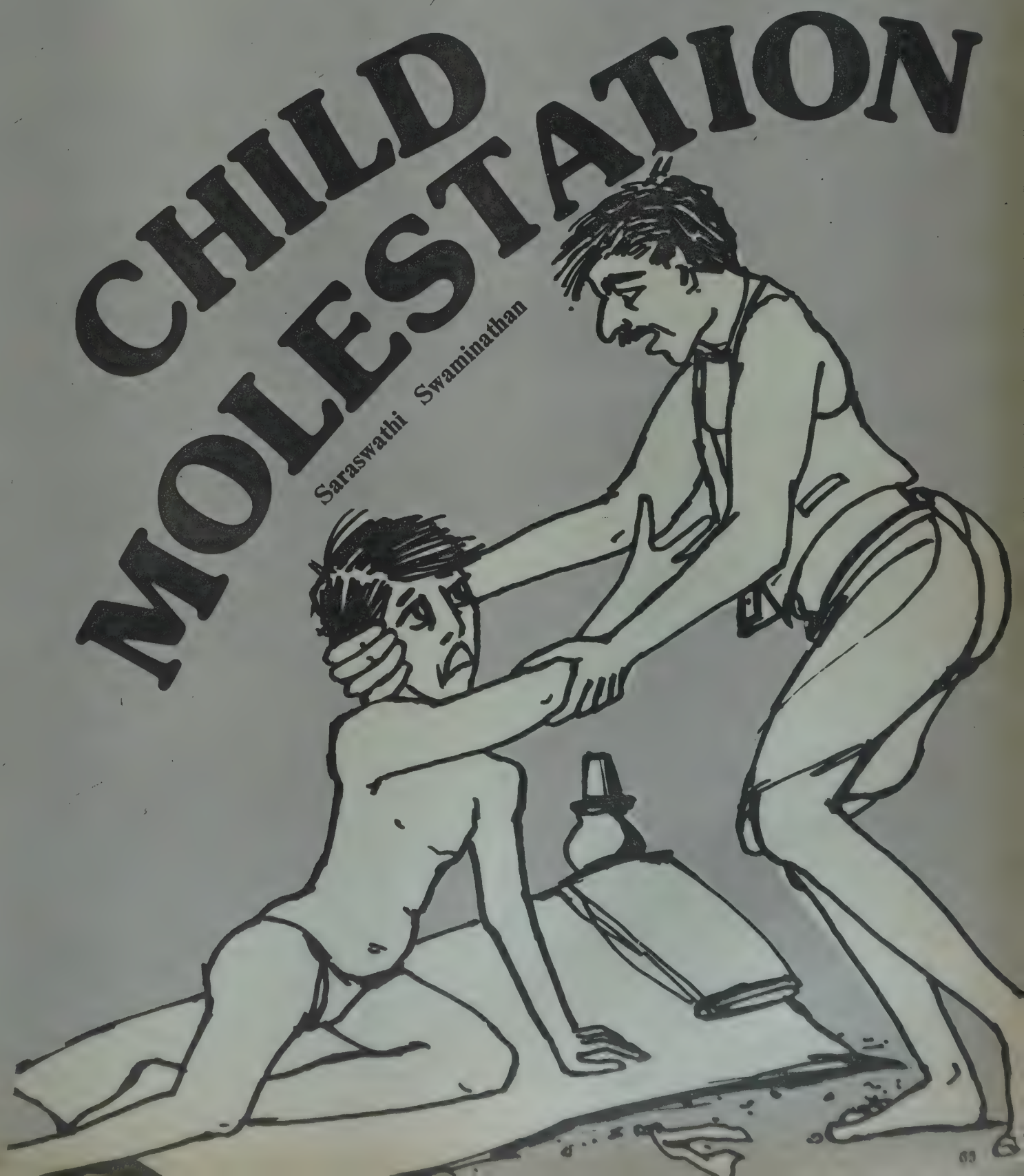
A large number of cases of hild molestation within the fa- nily are incestuous relations. exual relations between father nd daughter, mother and son, rother and sister or cousins of ifferent sexes are widely pre- alent. Highly respected friends nd relatives of the family, as vell as domestic servants of both exes, are also responsible for uch crimes.

In most of the cases where hildren below twelve years are nvolved, the act is a sponta- eous one on the part of the ad- lt. Under the influence of al- ohol, an adult may suddenly respond to his sexual impulses without any consideration of the victim.

Even stranger is the fact that many of the adults have indulged in such crimes without the influence of alcohol, drugs etc. Among middle class and more affluent families there is greater privacy in the homes, but the children may see the adults indulging more freely in caresses, kissing, and other forms of love-making. This arouses the sexual curiosity of the children. Boys of ten or eleven years of age have raped girls, without even knowing the significance of the act. In many middle class families the children are left in the care of servants, or alone at home, to be victimised by neighbours. In the poorer sections of society, adults indulge in sexual acts in front of the children for lack of privacy and this leads to the imitation of such acts among the children themselves or with adults.

Often it is not the external circumstances, but the psychological drives which lead to such crimes. There are cases of men who have sexually assaulted their daughters as an act of revenge against their wives who have left them. In the economically backward sections, children can be enticed to submit with the lure of food. In well-to-do families, children often lack affection and parental interest. Any relative, friend or even the domestic servant can entice the child with affection and love.

In some cases, after many years of sexual relationship, the wife is no longer capable of satisfying the sexual needs of the husband, who then seeks a younger girl, even his own daughter, for satisfaction. Brutal sex can be satisfied in any place



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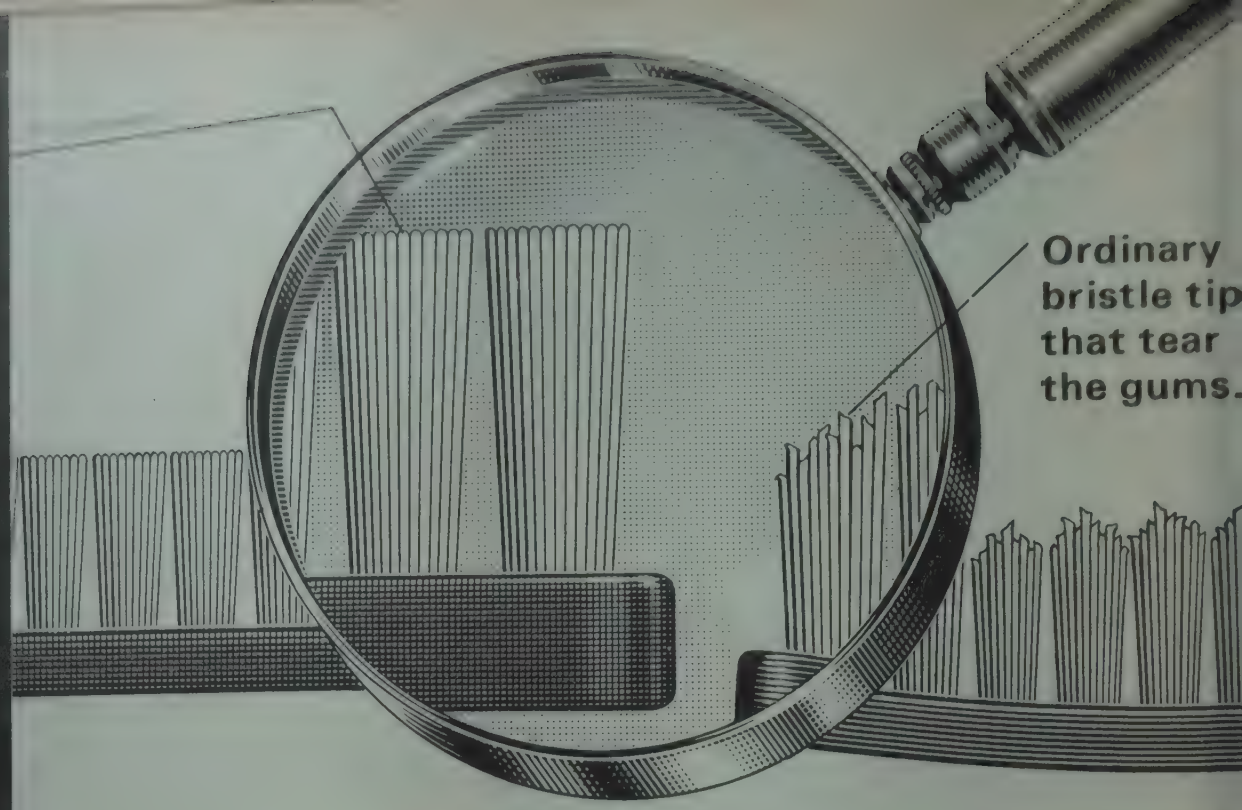

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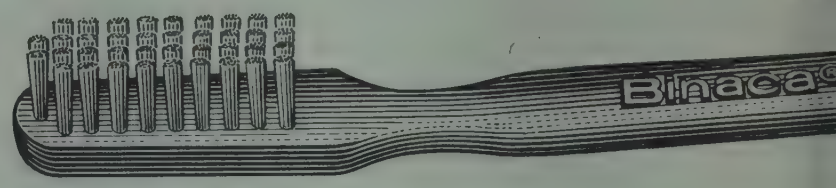

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CHILD MOLESTATION

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Outside of the family, child molestation is equally prevalent. In most cases, a man may not have the money for a prostitute and hence assaults a child. Two years ago a stranger raped and killed a five-year-old in a lavatory. One of the worst cases of this type was the rape of an eleven-month-old child.

Another reason for such rapes is that many illiterate men believe that a sexual act with a child can cure their venereal diseases. Young boys who work in a city like Bombay, live alone and sleep on the pavements of the city. They are often forced into acts of sodomy by older men.

For many young boys, sodomy has become a regular source of income. Young girls who come to a city in search of employment are often spotted by the touts and sold to prostitutes. In school dormitories, both sodomy and homosexuality are common occurrances.

To ignore the problem of child molestation would be one of the worst crimes to be committed by the adults in society. All the adult members of any society have a collective responsibility towards the children within that society. The cases which have been discussed here are urban-oriented, but this crime is prevalent in the rural areas in an equal measure.

According to Mr. Kulkarni, the main problem faced by such authorities as the police, social workers, remand homes, etc. is that most of the cases are not reported to them. The primary reason for this is the fear of social stigma. The parents feel that the reputation of the child will be ruined if the crime is known. Children often do not tell even their parents about the assault, for fear of punishment or a feeling of guilt and shame. Sometimes the social status of the adult concerned inhibits the declaration of the crime. As regards the well-to-do sections of society, practically none of the cases are officially reported to the authorities. Hence, although the authorities have knowledge of these cases, no legal action can be taken. In the economically backward sections of society, crimes are often reported but later withdrawn. The adults who have committed the crime silence the girls and their families with the threat of murder and often bribe them with money.

One of the shortcomings of legal process is that, while the child may be sent to a remand home for protection and treatment, the man who is guilty is let free on bail. Therefore the girl's guilt seems to be proved while the man claims to be innocent.

If child molestation were caused merely by the psychopathically affected individuals, then society could take measures to cure them and be rid of this evil. But it is an accepted fact that most of the men are otherwise normal persons, often holding responsible positions in society. Most of the crimes are not an outcome of psychological frustration, but are unpremeditated, spontaneous acts. But the effects of these acts leave a deep psychological imprint on the child victim. In many cases, these disturbances have led to despondency, feeling of guilt, or lack of adjustment to normal relationships, leading ultimately to suicide.

Experts in this field recommend the imparting of sex education to children, so that in certain cases they are able to avoid such assaults; it is very necessary for adults to assure the child victim that such an assault is a mere accident and that it would have no importance in its future life. The child at no stage should be made to pay for the crime which actually has been committed by adults. The basic dignity and reputation of the child victim should not be questioned by society.

As regards the attitude of an adult who, even in moments of heightened sexual excitement, can regard a child as an object of sexual satisfaction, the problem is difficult. Such a problem should be discussed at the adult level in colleges and other forums. No type of crime can be completely wiped out in any society, but, at least the attitudes of some individuals can be modified. At present the general attitude seems to be, after all a man is a man and sex is a strong urge, and so we must accept life as it is.

Crime at all levels is deplorable; at least adults could involve other adults in it and leave children out of it. This is the least that can be demanded of any society which claims to be civilised and progressive.

TRANSEXUALISM

Continued from page 63

development of female contours. The main aim of the operation is to remove the testicles and penis and construct a vagina. If needed, breasts are built up with the help of silicone bags. No attempt is made to disturb the internal organs. The entire procedure is done in one stage. As a first step, the testicles and penis are removed, preserving the skin. A vaginal cavity is then dissected and lined by the skin of the penis; the skin of the scrotum (testicle bags) is used to construct the female folds.

Sex-change from female to male entails multiple operations and the results are not as satisfying as the male to female conversion, says Dr. Pandya. Done in a number of stages, it requires at least three to four operations. Male hormones are given initially for long periods to suppress female characteristics and encourage the development of maleness. The main aim of the operation is to remove the breasts, close the vaginal opening and construct a penis and scrotal sac to resemble the male anatomy. At first, the breasts are removed and the vagina is fused; later the penis is constructed from the skin and fat of the abdomen in a multi-stage procedure. The end results, though not very satisfactory, are acceptable to the transexual. With artificial stiffening aids, he can have intercourse. The male operations are four times as many as the female's.

From his experience Dr. Pandya says, "The transexuals are beautiful people. Their IQ is very high; it's around 120 to 130. A brilliant architect, who was one of the persons who designed the pavillion of Expo '70 was also operated for sex-change. Unfortunately, a transexual is looked upon as an object of derision or curiousity. Most doctors don't like to come forward to handle these cases."

In India you cannot change your sex legally. "If you want your name changed, it's very easy but the most important thing is to change your sex in your birth certificate. None of my patients have made attempts to change their sex legally," remarked Dr. Pandya, who's the only surgeon in India to have the certificate of the American Board of Plastic Surgery.

After the sex-change operation, Dr. Pandya said, "A person can have as normal a sex as one can have in an abnormal situation. Before surgery, for the transexual, it was a homosexual relationship. With a reconstructed vagina, what 'she's' got is more than what 'she' had before."

Dr. Dinshaw Doongaji, a well-known Bombay psychiatrist, has handled several transexual cases

According to him, "If the mind cannot be changed to fit the body, then, perhaps, we should consider changing the body to fit the mind."

He describes the transexual as a person who has an opposite gender identity. "The sameness, unity and persistence of one's individuality as male, female or ambivalent, in greater or lesser degree, especially as it is experienced in self-awareness and behaviour, is gender identity. A gender role is everything that a person says and does, to indicate to others or to one's self the degree that one is either male or female or ambivalent; it includes but is not restricted to sexual arousal and response."

"A transexual's craving for change to the opposite sex leads to a persistent search for surgical reassignment. That's where we psychiatrists come into the picture," says Dr. Doongaji. A psychiatrist, he says, has to certify that a person seeking sex-change is sane and is not harbouring a delusion and that he's a true transexual, not a transvestite or a homosexual. Then he prepares the patient for the opposite role and gives him hormone treatment. Even after surgery, the psychiatrist plays a prominent role. He has to help the patient in adjusting to the problems of his changed sex.

"Sex is a psychological thing and the roots for transexuality are established around the age of three years," says Dr Doongaji.

While sex-change operations performed in India have been very microscopic in number, plenty of sex correction operations have been performed on children and teenagers who were pseudo-hermaphrodites with genitals of both sexes together. Unfortunately, only a few of them have been discovered and set right while the rest are condemned to live miserable lives.

In India there are a number of castrated eunuchs. Nothing much can be done about them. Every town and city of India has a sizeable population of eunuchs **(hijras)** and certainly they could not all have been that way. The practice of eunuchism really means castration of the male

The eunuchs have a strong urge to preserve this order and to increase their numbers; they entice young boys and initiate them into their order. After some time, they hold a regular ceremony, indulge in feasting and then mutilate the genitals of the boy.

With the advance in medical science, there is likelihood of more and more people coming forward for sex-change operations. And with a greater understanding of the problem by the medical profession, the press and the public, the path of the transexuals should be smoother.

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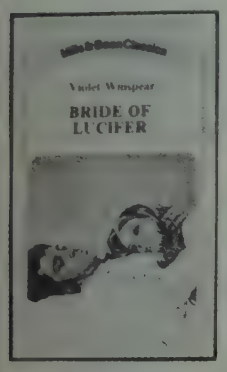

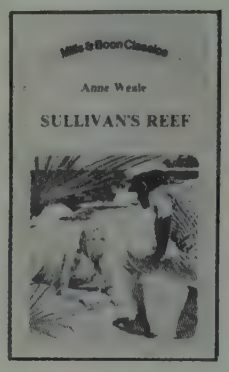

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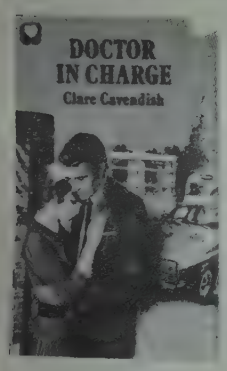

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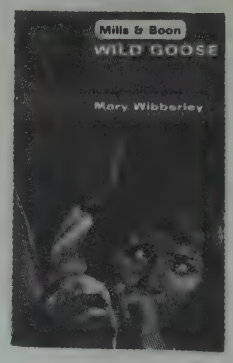

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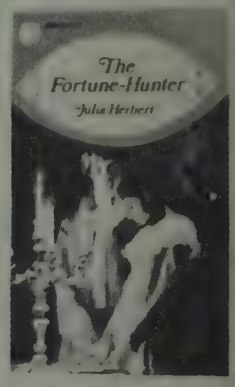

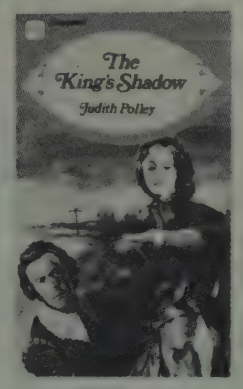

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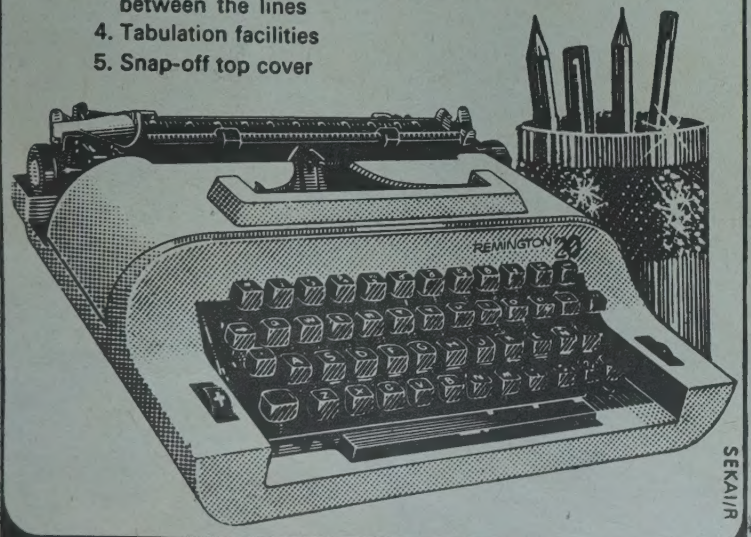

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